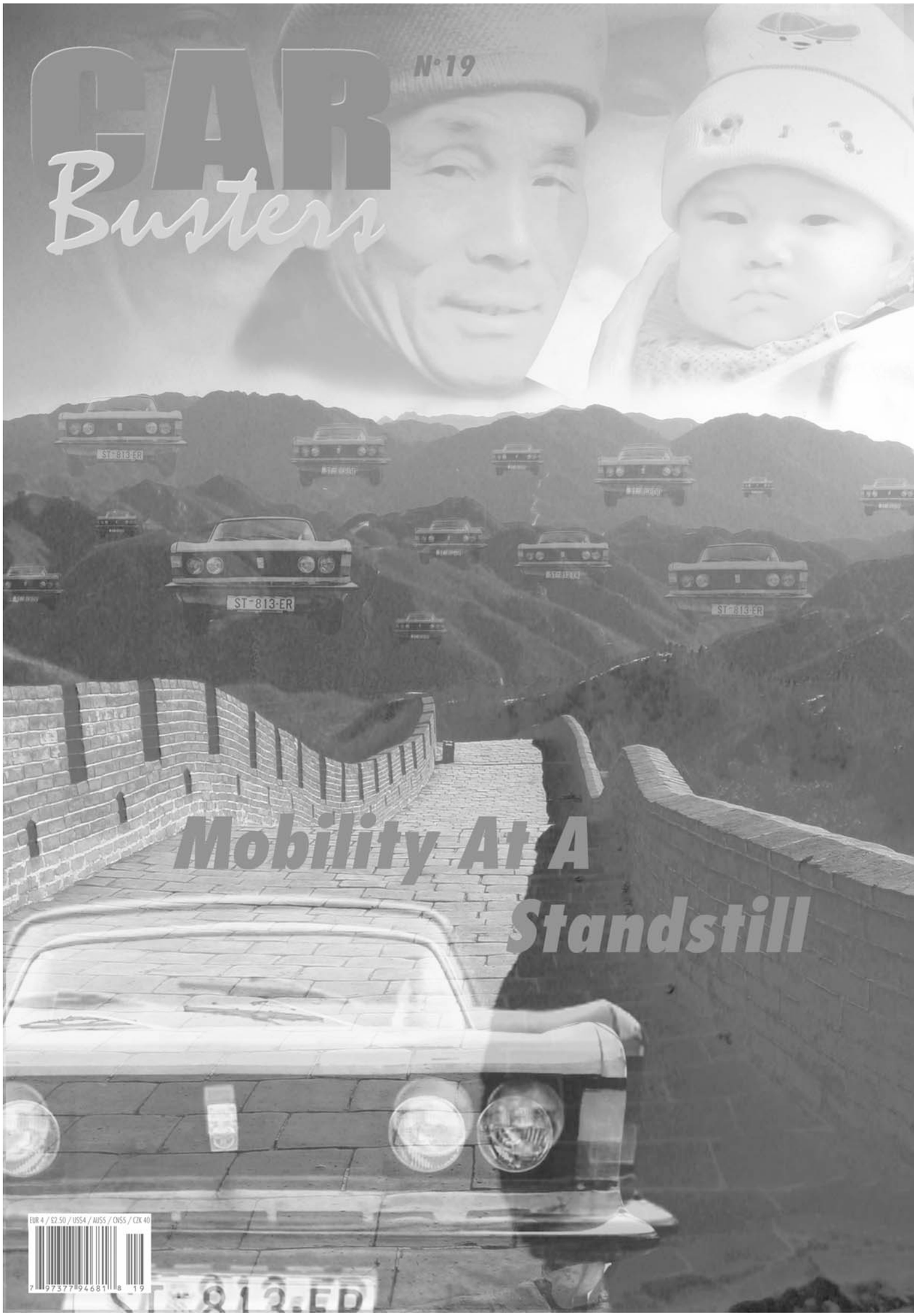
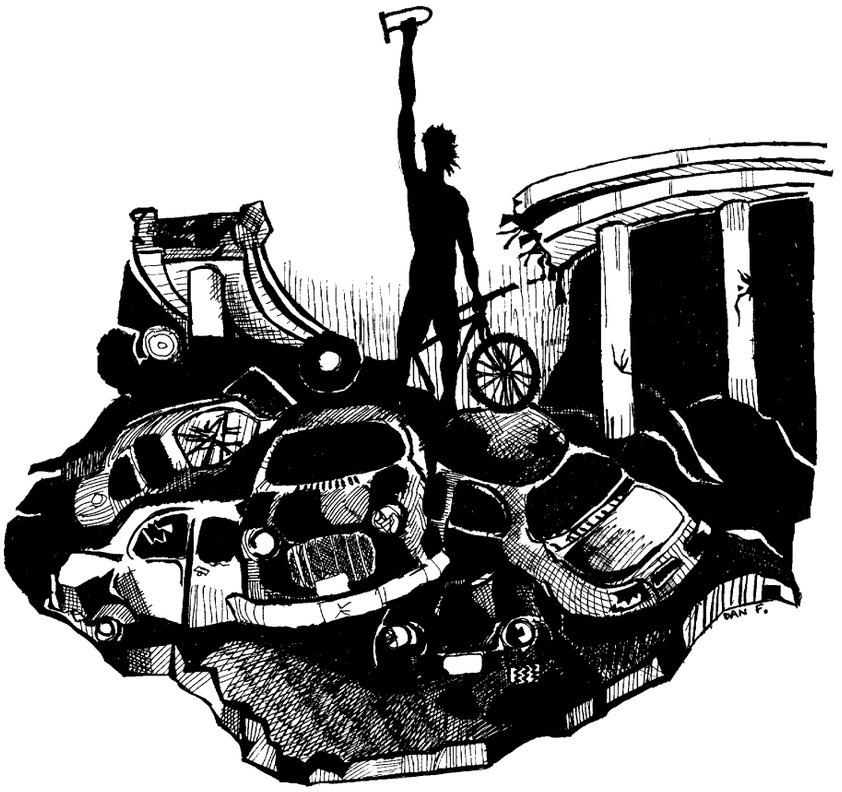

CAR
Busters
N°19
Mobility At A
Standstill
EUR 4 / $2.50 / US$4 / AU$5 / CN$5 / CZK 40

CAR Busters



Editorial Collective:
Tanja Eskola, Randy Ghent, Steven Logan, Stephan von Pohl

Other WCN Staff:
Arie Farnum (*Fundraiser),* Jason Kirkpatrick (*Conference Coordinator*), Roeland Kuijper (*Ecotopia Biketour Coordinator)*, Lucie Lébrová (*Office Manager*)

Contributing Writers:
Denis Cheynet, Drew Agras, Bridget Brown, Joe Dodds, Roeland Kuijper

Contributing Artists:
Raoul Anvélaut, Dominique Desbiens, Andy Singer

Please send subscriptions, letters, articles, artwork, photos, feedback and your life's savings to:

Car Busters, Krátká 26
100 00 Prague 10, Czech Rep.
tel: +(420) 274-810-849
fax: +(420) 274-816-727
info@carbusters.org
www.carbusters.org

Submission deadline for issue 20: May 15, 2004.

Reprints welcome with a credit to *Car Busters* and a reference to Carbusters.org.

Subscription/membership info and coupon: page 29 and 30.

ISSN: 1213-7154 / **MK** ČR: E 100018

Printed in the Czech Republic on 100% recycled paper by VAMB. Pre-press by QT Studio.

Distributed by Doormouse (Canada); AK Press, Desert Moon, Tower/MTS, and Ubiquity (US); INK (UK); and many others. See <www.carbusters.org/magazine> for a partial list of distribution outlets.

This publication was funded in part by the European Commission via the European Voluntary Service programme. The contents certainly do not reflect the position of the European Commission or its national agency.

Car Busters is a member of INK, the Independent News Collective, trade association of the UK alternative press.
www.ink.uk.com

Car Busters is a project of World Carfree Network (Worldcarfree.net).

Contents

12 Mobility at a Standstill
The car finds a home in China

16 The Automobile and *Décroissance*
De-growth and the cult of progress

18 Biking with DJ Liquid A
Turntables, bikes, and ecology

19 Auto Bio
Graphic art and the city

22 Debate: Why Single out SUVs
The cars we love to hate

---

4 Letters
Homo Cretinus; Pedal Me a Song; Global Warming; Comics and Art…

6 Car Cult Review
Laptops on the Steering Wheel; Amphibious Cars; Personal Mobility

7 Industry Watch
Bill Ford and Pinocchio; Orwellian Cars; Buy Ice Cream, Win Car

8 World News
Hookers and Honkers; Cyclists' Turf Battle; Bus Crisis in Kenya…

10 Action!
World Carfree Day; European Mobility Week; Climate Trashin' Critical Mass…

19 Skill Sharing
How To Make a Pedal-Powered Sound System

26 Studies & Reports
Global Warming and Extinction; Aviation Lending; Car Junkies

27 Book Reviews
Megaprojects and Risk: An Anatomy of Ambition; Toward the Livable City

---

Front cover: Design by Tanja Eskola. Wall of China photo by Ben Shipley, Grandson and Grandpa by Binphon Yang, Car by Karoly Kiralyfalvi. **Back cover**: Dominique Desbiens, with Chinese "One Less Car" text added.

Dear Readers...

Welcome to Issue 19!

In this issue, and in many of our past issues, we question those common sense ideas proffered by the economic elite. Terms like progress and development are defined along predictable and problematic lines by dominant groups in the global economy.

It is as if progress is a fixed path, with shops along the way offering us an array of candy-coated products. Why is progress measured by production levels of factories, and not the progress of our minds, like factories producing new thoughts and ideas, revolutionary or subtle, that question standard economic definitions of growth, development, and democracy?

What if we imagined progress as "positive negative growth," as the proponents of *décroissance* suggest? We need to find another societal path based on reduced consumption, says environmental researcher François Schneider.

When we begin to re-imagine these terms, then it is the so-called affluent societies, who are gobbling up the earth's resources, that will need assistance. But, of course, changes do not come overnight, imposed on people. The visibility of alternative lifestyles, like DJ Liquid A who finds his records in dumpsters and then bikes to his gigs, and the opening up of possibilities will bring us closer to a world where the Wal-Mart-Tesco monoculture crumbles underneath the feet of mobilised pedestrians.

However, money-lending organisations, such as the World Bank, see things differently. They see the car as a sign of progress and so roads are built at alarming paces, as is the case in Guangzhou, China.

On Chinese city streets, everybody is going somewhere and nowhere at the same time. If the SUV, the subject of this issue's debate, finds its way into China, then the world might start crumbling under the weight of its collective, inflated ego.

This kind of progress leads to the dark, urban chaos depicted in Dominique Desbiens' cartoon, Auto Bio.

We might read the idea of *décroissance* in light of unwalkable streets around the world because, like our futures, they are clouded with visions of cars cooked in profitable vats of oil. The city is an unfriendly place for those who choose to manoeuvre its streets with a bike or two feet.

So perhaps we need to reverse the order of things and imagine a world where progress means turning down the speed of the assembly lines, walking, biking, car sharing. Heels over head! Instead of an elite group making decisions that affect all of us, we need to forge alliances around common causes such as the livability of our cities. It is about creatively re-imagining the unsustainable language of progress and work together — activists, intellectuals, artists, urban planners, etc. — to imagine solutions for a world gone mad.

If our cities are reaching their bursting point, what is happening out in the country? In the next issue of *Car Busters* magazine we will explore carfree living in the countryside. Please send any submissions related to this topic by April 30.

And on sad note, Canadian environmental activist and former *Car Busters* contributor Tooker Gomberg took his own life on March 5. Read about Gomberg's prolific and politically disruptive life in our World News pages. - ***SL***

Join Us, And We'll Take On The World

We've got a name! We've got a logo! We've got a website, statutes and a charter.

So now, 12 months after the process began at Towards Carfree Cities III in Prague, we're ready for member organisations to join World Carfree Network. So if your group promotes cycling, walking, or other alternatives to car dependence and automobile-based planning, we want you to join us, get involved, and help create an effective international voice for change.

world carfree network

The benefits include assistance with campaign resources, contacts, outreach and fundraising, and collaboration in international projects and organised exchanges.

Become part of this new community by sending in a signed copy of the network charter. See <www.worldcarfree.net/about_us/memberorgs.php> for further details, and to download a PDF of the charter.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Towards Carfree Cities IV

Berlin, Germany
July 19-24, 2004

Register now:
www.worldcarfree.net/conference

Conference includes the first annual general meeting of World Carfree Network, to be held on July 23.

CB#19_part1.p65 3 3/10/04, 5:59 AM
Black

Letters

Just the Facts, Ma'am

Thanks Todd Edelman for a 95% supportive letter [*Car Busters* #18] about my insistence that we build for pedestrians instead of designing a "better car," the frequent cause of environmentalists who are not looking at the "ecological" interconnections in society and its built environments.

The central issue is not not my perseverance or the growing evidence that lack of a whole systems view of the built environment — cities, towns and villages — is a desperate problem, being, among other disasters, the prime cause of global warming and the associated impending collapse of species diversity all over the Earth. The central issue is that whole systems are not seen as such, but as random agglomerations of details that can be fixed, each one independently.

We have to understand the whole or we come up with counter-productive "answers" that are really only the next question — and problem. Such as the "better car." Though it sounds good at first, seen from a whole systems perspective it becomes evident that the "better car" causes — in the context of today's infrastructure, not to say values — a false impression of progress and righteousness while postponing for God knows how much longer doing anything meaningful about the structure of the city itself, the context in which the vehicle and pedestrian operate.

My apparent rigidity on the subject is the hard-headed insistence of the mathematician who actually believes that 2+2 equals 4 when the politician and wistful dreamer insist that, because of the attitude of the electorate and his or her personal desires, 2+2 equals more for each of us, say 5. I just don't believe it is true. Ecology rules!

Richard Register
Oakland, California, USA

Note: "Just the facts, ma'am" was a famous line from the 1950s TV show *Dragnet*. Oddly, the writer for that show was the father of a would-be pioneer of carfree communities, Chris Canfield of Cerro Gordo, Oregon. Oddly again — and sadly — his rural village project outside of Cottage Grove, Oregon, was put on hold for decades by Oregon's requirements for more "environmentally sound" planning. His county, failing to come up with a plan, was not allowed to build anything innovative, including his organisation's plan, for all those stultifying, community-busting decades. What's at Cerro Gordo now is a mere ghost of what could have been, thanks to environmentalism that didn't understand ecological town planning.

Pedal Me a Song

Dear Critical Mass & Bike Friends, my name is Heather Lev and I am a political protest singer-songwriter with two songs, "Critical Mass" and "If Cars Were Banned" that you and your members and friends might enjoy. These songs (in MP3 format), plus complete lyrics, are available for free at my website, Heatherlev.com (click on MP3 & Lyrics on the left side of the page). Feel free to post the songs on your website, link to my site, or just let your friends know about the songs. Thanks, and have a great day.

Heather Lev
Heatherlev.com

Double-Entendre?

Cover article of Issue #18: "Critical Mass Debate" ...ahem... "Critical Masturbate"?

Deliberate? If not, a wonderful double-entendre for the innocence of which I congratulate you heartily!

Richard Lane
York, UK

photo: Harry Hellos

These SUV "subvertisements" have been spotted around London.

Greetings from Germany

Hello all. Of course your work has meaning! Just keep in mind how big the powers are against which you're fighting. In Germany, for example, every seventh production job is in the car industry, every third in car industry suppliers. It's not hard to figure out where there's money to be made. The world's five largest industrial enterprises are in the car industry — General Motors, Exxon, Ford, Shell, Toyota. A country's international strength and influence can be measured by the number of cars registered: 35% North America, 35% Western Europe, 15% Asia, 5% Eastern Europe and the former USSR, 10% for the other countries combined. And then there's the fact that a car factory can be quickly converted into a tank factory — as if "normal cars" don't look like tanks already.

Here in Nuremberg, we are now in the second year of organising monthly bike demonstrations called Bikeparade. The idea is to show how beautiful bike riding can be. The Bikeparade may be a demonstration, but it's also supposed to be fun. We have music, an antique bicycle, and whatever else shows up. I don't see much point in being politically divisive and creating enemies. If the advantages are enough to convince people, then people will change and things will change as well. Here, too, things are moving forward slowly, but they are moving. If you're going to commit to a political goal, it's very important to have continuity. But eventually you'll succeed, right? By the way, we have a website: <http://beam.to/bikeparade>.

Uli Schönweiß
Nuremberg, Germany

Futurists in the Media

Hi there, thought you might like to know that you're not the only ones making a connection between car culture and the Futurists (*Car Busters* #18). A Spanish newspaper recently commented on a fatal car crash [*Ed. note: in which a Ferrari doing 150 kmh smashed into a tunnel wall in the centre of Madrid*] by making reference to Marinetti and the Futurists' love for the automobile. The accompanying article was titled "Death Drove a Ferrari." Maybe they read your magazine?

Christoph von Pohl
Vienna, Austria

Re: Car Living Your Way

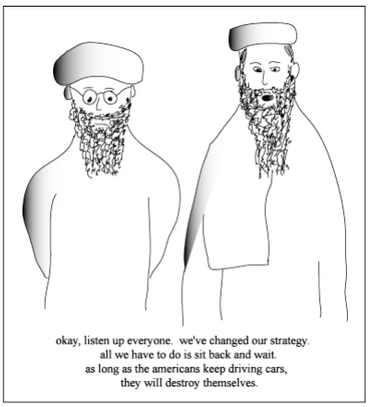
Thank you for reviewing my book *Car Living Your Way*. Even though living in your car is quite different from the noble life you believe in, I appreciate how well you wrote the review. It is simply

CB#19_part1.p65 4 3/10/04, 5:59 AM
Black

one of the very best reviews I've read to date. Thank you again for reviewing my book.

A. Jane Heim
Paw Paw, Illinois, USA

Osama Likes Cars?


okay, listen up everyone. we've changed our strategy.
all we have to do is sit back and wait.
as long as the americans keep driving cars,
they will destroy themselves.

Scott Larkin
Portland, Oregon, USA

Homo Cretinus

San Diego, my new home, was burning on October 26. I was suprised, then, to see a lady sitting *outside* the health food megamarket. Why would someone sit outside on such an eerie day, breathing the smoke of burning carpets, vinyl siding, insulation and plastic blowing from the east? To collect petition signatures against California's "Car Tax" – a recent tripling of car registration fees by now former governor Gray Davis.

The entire scene was a sickening reminder of California's dysfunctional reliance on personal automobile travel. Those suburbs to the far east, made practical to city workers by their cars and highways, were built in forest settings, in an area susceptible to periodic fires. The irony of the situation is that the so-called "Car Tax" went directly to local police and fire departments, the same people struggling to contain what became the largest fire in California's recorded history.

Note that this occurred a few weeks *after* California's recall election, in which two anti-"Car Tax" candidates collectively gathered nearly 2/3 the vote. The recall winner, Arnold Schwarzenegger, a name almost synonymous with outsized automobile rage, an owner of no less than five Hummers, had already pledged to repeal the "Car Tax" as his first act in office, a promise he has now kept.

Why then would someone feel compelled, in this political and physical environment, to breathe poisonous air for a few hours to collect signatures for a sure thing? The only conceivable answer is that there is some offshoot of *homo sapiens*, call it *homo cretinus*, which thrives in the toxic environment created by and for the automobile. The needs of this creature clash with those of normal humans – reasoning with them is useless when your base assumptions conflict.

Steven Elliot Pav
San Diego, California, USA

Bristol Bikes

Dear *Car Busters*, your mag arrived this morning, great! I enclose press from Bristol's carfree day, third year running now. And our stickers for your rear mudguards.

Pete Taylor
Bristol, UK

[*Ed. note: Thanks for the stickers. We're glad to see that Carfree Day got so much good press. Headlines like "Bikes Drive out Cars for Day" and "Councillor Takes Lead in Big Bike Ride" are encouraging indeed.*]

Global Warning

In a 2002 poll the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research conducted in the US, 38% of respondents thought that global warming was a "very serious threat" to the quality of life in the US.

A separate 2002 Gallup poll showed that 29% of respondents worried about the global warming problem "a great deal."

In a 2003 poll by the Foreign Policy Association, 41% of the respondents (likely voters) said that the US should ratify the Kyoto Accord, agreeing with the following statement:

"While the treaty reduces US and European emissions at a faster rate than those for countries like China and India, it is only fair that these nations have the opportunity to catch up in industrial development."

The poll results show that a minority of people in the United States are very concerned about global warming, and would favour some sort of government action to address the problem. How to convince these people to take the step of getting rid of their automobiles? The world is running out of time: we cannot rely on a 20-year period of transition to non-fossil fuel economies.

Cars are an important source of social status, invidious distinction, and conspicuous consumption. People here in the United States can act as if automobile ownership is a fundamental human right.

Many people would probably feel that if they no longer had a car, they would be plunged into total degradation. I don't think that we will convince enough people by saying that bicycle riding is fun, or that buses are the safest means of transportation. I've not owned an automobile for over 30 years, and I know from personal experience that without a car, employers won't hire me for some jobs, I can't live in some neighbourhoods, and I can't attend some events.

The industrialised countries must make sacrifices, since to go beyond the inadequate steps that the Kyoto Accord would mandate, the world would be expecting China and India to give up economic development goals; people there would expect, in return, a change in the US lifestyle.

Milton Takei
Eugene, Oregon, USA

A Happy Contributor

Great issue! The stories were excellent the cover amazing...thanks for putting the B.E.E.E.P. *Roadkill Bill* cartoon and the controversy about it in there. *PULSE* [*Ed. note: the Minneapolis magazine which published* Roadkill Bill] dropped the comic this week. I've learned that comics and art have an amazing power to piss off people!

I've been recommending people watch episode 7 of the PBS series "New York" which is in large part a good history of how cities like New York were destroyed by urban renewal and highways and how Jane Jacobs stopped Robert Moses from building expressways across Manhattan.

The Cross-Bronx Expressway was a tremendous feat of engineering on an almost unprecedented scale. One of the neighborhoods destroyed by the Cross-Bronx Expressway was East Tremont. The expressway gutted East Tremont's heart. It had been a place where everybody knew everybody else. Many of those who had lived in East Tremont had been born there, shopped there, married there, and, had it not been for the expressway, they would have died there. More than twelve other functioning neighbourhoods suffered the same fate. Built on a straight line, the shape of the expressway did not accommodate existing neighbourhoods and the people who lived in their way. Moses built his expressway on a straight line because he could. The Cross-Bronx Expressway was the most destructive expressway-building project in the city but it was not the last: 13 expressways would be built throughout the boroughs, 130 miles of concrete laid, 21 separate neighbourhoods torn apart, and the lives of more than 250,000 people...

The documentary is out on DVD, and PBS has a good companion website that's worth reading: <www.pbs.org/wnet/newyork/laic/episode7/e7_mm.html>.

Ken Avidor
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

CB#19_part1.p65 5 3/10/04, 5:59 AM
Black

"That's a big no. The president believes that it's an American way of life, and that it should be the goal of policy makers to protect the American way of life. The American way of life is a blessed one."

- White House press secretary Ari Fleisher on whether President Bush would call on drivers to reduce their fuel consumption

CAR CULT REVIEW

Can I Have a Wireless Connection With My Hamburger?

In the latest extension of the office space, the laptop steering wheel mount brings the office and the Internet into the car.

Aaron Roth, vice president of marketing and sales at Arkon Resources, says that this latest accessory will "allow mobile executives to catch up on work while in the car. "

"With Wi-Fi [wireless Internet] becoming more and more popular, we see mobile executives using this product along with their Wi-Fi connection at local fast food chain parking lots to catch up on e-mails and other business."

Of course, the product comes with a safety warning that states "this product is only for use when the vehicle is parked and the ignition is turned off. Do not attempt to drive a vehicle with mount attached to steering wheel. Death or injury to yourself and others would occur."

This risk did not stop Roth from giving a mount to his girlfriend.

"She uses it to eat lunch on each day. She likes to go out to the car to eat to get away from the chaos of the work environment."

- ***Car Busters***

If Your Car Really Loved You...

If isolation and cars that care are fantasies for the future, then the Toyota Personal Mobility concept vehicle is bound to be a success.

The PM, as it is referred to on Toyota's website, "fits like a glove to create a feeling of unity between the driver and the vehicle. Cutting-edge vehicle-to-vehicle communications technologies are employed under the concept of 'meeting, linking and hanging out together.'"

This vehicle, still far from mass market reality, is "designed to get car owners dreaming about the existential possibilities of the cyborg communter," writes Bruce Grierson of *The New York Times Magazine.*

"While some of the PM's features seem fated to further distract motorsts already driving with a cellphone in one hand," writes Grierson. "John Hanson, Toyota's national manager for production communications, insists that we will love them. One day, he says, all of the car-to-car and car-to-driver chatter will be voice-activated and absolutely second nature, a safe and seamless give-and-take between metal and flesh."

"What happens is that the vehicle begins to anticipate what you're going to want to do, what your priorities are, what your agendas are," says Hanson.

"It knows what kind of music you like. It knows where you live and how you usually drive home. So it thinks ahead. It begins to know you as a person the way a good friend would."

- ***Car Busters***

Experience The Sensation

"Open your mind and imagination to a vehicle unlike any other," implore the inventors of a car that runs on road and water – the world's first high-speed amphibian.

It can run up to speeds of 100 kmh on land and up to 30 kmh with its engine and jet propulsion system, respectively.

In January, Reuters reported that "daredevil entrepreneur" Richard Branson drove across the English Channel in this amphibious vehicle.

Reuters quotes Branson as saying, "One day I envisage teams from across the globe racing across the English Channel in amphibious vehicles to set records and win trophies."

We at *Car Busters* are unimpressed. We want to see Branson crossing the channel while using his notebook computer mounted to the steering wheel. That would be something special.

- ***Car Busters***

Chick Cars

Much like a fashion statement, a car says something about its driver. A minivan might mean a mom's inside or maybe just an auto executive; and a truck is truly tough.

Then there are cars that are strictly for the ladies. You've heard the term – they're called "chick cars."

"I think the smaller cars are chick cars. The [Mazda] Miata is obviously a chick car," said Bob Gordon, president of Autochannel.com.

Gordon knows a chick car when he sees one. He said more and more women today care as much about the cars they drive as men do.

Men aren't being overlooked. For the fellas, Gordon said automobiles are necessary equipment. The opposite of being a chick car is a chick magnet.

"I always say that the automobile is a young man's second most important thing," Gordon said.

- ***News 24 Houston***

"The saguaro cactus, found in the deserts of Arizona, can weigh approximately 100 pounds per foot. This cactus weighed 10,000 pounds." Submitted by Phil Vermeyen.

CB#19_part1.p65 6 3/10/04, 5:59 AM
Black

INDUSTRY WATCH

Digging the dirt on your favourite corporations

Ford Motors Threatens To Sue Over Pinocchio Ads

In late February, the US environmental group Bluewater Network received a cease-and-desist letter from Ford Motor Company for its campaign attacking Ford's environmental policies.

Ford is demanding that the group stop unlawful conduct in a print and Internet campaign that depicts its chairman and chief executive as Pinocchio.

Bluewater began running ads in February in national publications including *The New York Times, Mother Jones, E Magazine*, and *The New Republic*. The ads accuse Bill Ford Jr. of breaking a pledge he made in 2000 to increase the fuel mileage of Ford's popular lineup of sport utility vehicles by 25% by 2005. They feature a drawing of Ford with an extra-long nose, and the words: "Bill Ford Jr. or Pinocchio? Don't Buy His Environmental Rhetoric, Don't Buy His Cars."

Russell Long, director of Bluewater Network, stated, "The day Mr. Ford broke his pledge to increase fuel mileage was tragic for the environment, but trying to stifle the free speech rights of our citizens isn't going to solve anything. When he took the reins of Ford Motor Company, Mr. Ford promised to preserve and protect the environment, but his average vehicle isn't any better now than it was then. For the past three years, he's also ignored our requests to meet personally to discuss ways to turn this around. Frankly, he's been a big disappointment.

Bill Ford also personally lobbied Congress against raising national fuel mileage standards, promising instead to deliver fuel efficiency without federal regulations.

- ***CorpWatch.org***

Orwellian Cars

Last year, Curt Dunnam bought a Chevrolet Blazer with one of the most popular new features in high-end cars: the OnStar personal security system.

The heavily advertised communications and tracking feature is used nationwide [in the US] by more than two million drivers, who simply push a button to connect, via a built-in cellphone, to a member of the OnStar staff. A Global Positioning System, or GPS, helps the employee give verbal directions to the driver or locate the car after an accident. The company can even send a signal to unlock car doors for locked-out owners, or blink the car's lights and honk the horn to help people find their cars in an endless plain of parking spaces.

A big selling point for the system is its use in thwarting car thieves. Once an owner reports to the police that a car has been stolen, the company, which was started by General Motors, can track it to help intercept the thieves, a service it performs about 400 times each month.

But for Dunnam, the more he learned about his car's security features, the less secure he felt. A research support specialist at Cornell University, he is concerned about privacy. He has enough technical knowledge to worry that someone else – say, law enforcement officers, or even hackers – could listen in on his phone calls, or gain control over his automotive systems without his knowledge or consent. Any gadget that can track a carjacker, he reasons, can just as readily be used to track him.

"While I don't believe GM intentionally designed this system to facilitate Orwellian activities, they sure have made it easy," he said.

OnStar is one of a growing number of automated eyes and ears that enhance driving safety and convenience but that also increase the potential for surveillance. Privacy advocates say that the rise of the automotive technologies, including electronic toll areas, location-tracking devices, "black box" data recorders like those found on airplanes and even tiny radio ID tags in tires, are changing the nature of Americans' relationship with their cars.

Beth Givens of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse said the car had long been a symbol of Kerouac-flavored freedom, and a haven. But with the growing number of monitoring systems, she said, "Now, the car is Big Brother."

James E. Hall, a transportation lawyer and former chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, said the monitoring systems presented a subtle blend of benefit and risk. "We are moving toward a kind of automobile that nobody's ever known," he said. "It's mostly good news, but there are negative things that we will have to work through."

- ***The New York Times, Jan. 2***

Buy Ice Cream, Win Car

I was wondering if there are still lots of cases where either car ads or other product ads denigrate the image of public transport?

I remember one case where the ads were put directly on bus stops and called on people to "Tear up your monthly pass" [ad placed by Aurora/Oldsmobile on the sides of US buses; see *Car Busters* #2, page 6].

Last summer in Estonia an ice cream company had an aggressive ad campaign together with Opel, bringing anti-public transport ads directly to the bus stop shelters, radio, TV.

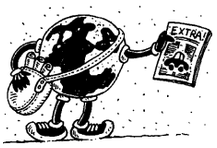
The text says, "Buy five Balbiino ice creams and you get the possibility to win a car. Then you will never need to take the bus again."

It is really irritating that a "soft" thing like ice cream is marketed through an anti-public transport ad, kids are very sensitive to these kinds of campaigns and it is very easy to shape their values.

- ***Mari Jussi, Estonian Green Movement***

CB#19_part1.p65 7 3/10/04, 5:59 AM
Black

World News



Congestion Charging Sweeps The World

Cities throughout Britain and across the world are poised to introduce their own congestion charges after the apparent success of the first year of the ground-breaking London scheme.

Edinburgh and Cardiff are the furthest ahead, with plans for new charges on cars to raise money for investment, to be introduced within two years. The Scottish and Welsh capitals are both advancing proposals to charge drivers to pass a cordon around their city centres, explicitly linked to raising money for trams, trains and other transport improvements.

Stockholm is to start a pilot project next year and Barcelona and Milan have shown interest in the idea. In North America, San Francisco is said to be moving close to charging. And the Brazilian city of São Paulo is working on a proposal as well.

Studies claim that 26 out of 34 cities in 15 European countries showed "significant support" for some form of charging. Across 11 countries in Latin America, 47% of cities claimed "significant support" and a further 40% were "thinking about it."

The World Bank is also reported to be pressing booming cities in developing countries to use charging to curb exploding traffic growth, calling for cities to use charges to raise money for much-needed infrastructure and free up congested buses, which are traditionally the main form of mass transport.

- ***The Guardian, Feb. 15***

Europe

Finn Got A Decent Ticket

FINLAND - One of Finland's richest men has been handed a record EUR 170,000 speeding ticket, thanks to the country's policy of relating the fine to your income.

Jussi Salonoja, the 27-year-old heir to a family-owned sausage empire, was given the £116,000 ticket after being caught driving 80 kmh in a 40 kmh zone. Helsinki police came up with the figure after tax office data showed that Salonoja earned close to £7million in 2002.

- BBC NEWS, Feb. 10

Hookers & Honkers

THE NETHERLANDS - By 2005, visitors of the Amsterdam red light district ("hooker-walkers" in Dutch) will have to walk or take a bike.

After 20 years of talking, the Amsterdam city council has decided to stop cars from entering the most famous rectangle in Amsterdam between 8 pm and 7 am. All too often, pedestrians had to dodge dangerous tourist car drivers who were obviously busier with honking at hookers than looking at the narrow canal streets.

In line with the *couleur locale*, the city council has decided to erect a number of penis-like traffic poles (called "Amsterdammertjes"), which local residents can get up (or down) with a special pass. Thirty-seven parking places will disappear.

- ***Frank van Schaik, Amsterdam***

Shell Goes For Solar Power

GERMANY - In July, Shell Solar and German solar firm GEOSOL will open the world's largest solar power station south of Leipzig, Germany. The total output capacity will be five megawatts.

The solar power station is due on stream in July 2004. The power will be fed directly into the grid and will be sufficient to meet the electricity demand of about 1,800 households.

In addition to growth in the solar field, Shell plans to increase its oil production 3% annually.

- ***GreenBiz.com, Jan. 20***

Africa

Carfree Day In Cape Town

SOUTH AFRICA - The usual mad traffic rush that besets Klipfontein Road in Cape Town was replaced for a day by a throng of cyclists and pedestrians revelling in the carfree zone. Motorised vehicles were banned from using Klipfontein Road on Sunday, February 22.

The event was geared towards enhancing the quality of life of commuters and pedestrians, and balancing motorised transport with the provision of safer public recreational spaces.

Transport Minister Tasneem Essop said a similar event in 2003 had proved so popular that her department, with the City of Cape Town, decided to stage another.

"You have a whole day of freedom. There is a group of ladies here who only started cycling in November. Some of them have never been on a bicycle before," said Essop.

One of those women was Lena Chintu, 70, from Khayelitsha. "It makes me feel younger. I am enjoying myself," said Chintu.

Essop said the event was also about promoting safer cycling. "This event is also about building unity among communities."

- ***The Cape Argus, Feb. 23***

Fighting Malaria On Bikes

SUDAN - Since the middle of last year, around 49,000 people in the Bahr-el-Ghazal province of south Sudan have been treated for malaria by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) medical teams that are using bicycles to get to areas that have been isolated by recent severe floods. 71,000 people have been treated in the area – including 800 severe cases – when figures from the fixed facilities are included.

"These bicycle operated clinics are the only

CB#19_part1.p65 8 3/10/04, 5:59 AM
Black

way to treat patients in regions that have been cut off by the floods," explained Greg Elder, medical coordinator for MSF. "These clinics prevent the death of children and vulnerable adults who would otherwise remain stranded in their villages."

Already weakened from malnutrition, children under five are even more vulnerable this year. Over 50% of the patients treated by the mobile teams have been children under the age of five.

In each village, the teams diagnose, treat and distribute drugs to hundreds of people. An average of 5,000 patients are treated every week in the MSF fixed facilities and mobile clinics.

The floods have made transport by 4x4 ineffective as huge areas have become marshlands that also prevent people from visiting the MSF facilities. Bicycles are more easily transported through heavily flooded areas.

MSF bought a total of 40 bikes to equip 15 teams; each team is made up of a minimum of one nurse and an assistant. The teams have been active since August. They transport with them the necessary medical equipment to care for approximately 400 patients. Each stop lasts four or five days and there are six mobile clinics that leave from Akuem, four from Madhol and five from Gok Machar.

- ***Médecins Sans Frontières, Dec. 13***

Safety Rules Threw Whole Country Into a Crisis

KENYA - A transport crisis threw the country into chaos when the government announced only 8,622 matatus [buses] out of the estimated 25,000 nationwide complied with the new traffic safety rules, which include fitting seat belts and speed governors.

At the rate of kitting out around 4,000 matatus a week, this means it could be as long as four weeks before they are all back on the road.

Another problem is to find drivers who are both qualified and have no criminal record. The majority of existing drivers are unlicensed while others have criminal records. Many drivers have only fake documents while others are under age.

The shortage has prevented many matatus from getting back to business and has meant hundreds of thousands of workers and students have had to walk to work and school.

It has also meant many workers have turned to their cars and spent frustrating hours in traffic jams on all major routes. Meanwhile, an employers association says the transport crisis has cost the economy millions of shillings.

- ***The Nation, Feb. 13***

Asia-Pacific

Beijing Urges Residents To Take Public Transport

CHINA - Beijing plans to build huge free or low-cost parking lots beyond the city's fourth and fifth ring roads to encourage more car owners to take buses or subways to the downtown area.

The plan is just one of the multiple measures the city plans to take to ease its notorious traffic congestion as the 2008 Summer Olympic Games draw near. The Beijing Traffic Management Bureau receives between 400 and 500 calls reporting traffic jams every day and more than 90% of the roads are filled to capacity during rush hour every morning and evening.

The current layout of Beijing expanded ring roads around the city centre is seen as the root cause of the endless traffic jams. Part of the problem is the lack of easy links between bus routes, subways and cars, says Liu Xiaoming, vice-director of the Beijing Municipal Communications Commission. He blames the problem on the improper distribution of bus routes.

According to the communication commission, half of the city's investment in transportation will go towards public transit construction in the next few years, marking a jump from the current 20%.

- ***China Daily, Jan. 13***

BTC Workers Outraged By Oil Company's Violations

GEORGIA – Georgian workers on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (BTC) are having their rights violated by the BTC Company, the BP-led consortium in charge of the project. Trade unionists working on the pipeline's Georgian section are extremely concerned that both Georgian labour laws and employment standards laid down by the International Labour Organisation are being overlooked by BTC Company, under extreme pressure to keep to its construction schedule.

BTC workers in Georgia are currently required to work 12-14 hours per day, including weekends and holidays, to secure a minimum subsistence salary. The workers are demanding an increase in their hourly wage.

"When the IFC and the EBRD came to help finance this pipeline, it was claimed that their presence would guarantee the highest international project standards. Where are these banks now?" asked Keti Kvinkadze, a lawyer representing Tbilisi NGO Green Alternative.

The IFC and the EBRD are the two international development banks which are providing US$500 million in loans for the BTC project. Their funding decisions paved the way for further financing from export credit agencies and a syndicate of 15 commercial banks.

- ***CEE Bankwatch Network, Feb. 2***

Well-Travelled Woman, 101, Ends Life's Journey

CHINA – A 101-year-old woman in Tahe County of Harbin, capital of Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, died on New Year's Eve after traveling across half the country on a pedicab driven by her 74-year-old son.

Before they returned to Harbin in early December because of her illness, Wu Huizhen was taken around for more than 20,000 kilometres across dozens of provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions from May 2000 by Wang Yimin. "I just wanted to take my mother to see outside world," Wang said, adding she was disappointed by not setting foot in Tibet Autonomous Region.

- ***China Daily, Jan. 15***

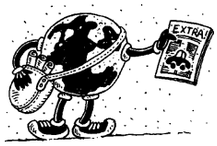
Asia's First Bogota-Inspired Bus Rapid Transit System

INDONESIA - To address the city's mounting congestion and air pollution problems, Jakarta opened Asia's first fully closed, Bogotá-style Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor on January 15. The 12.9 km exclusive busway connects the city's Blok M Bus Station to the Kota Railway Station, running along one of Jakarta's most congested thoroughfares. Crowds of riders lined up to take advantage of free trips on the buses, some coming from cities hours away to experience the new system. Fare collection began on February.

- ***Itdp.org, Feb. 2004***

CB#19_part1.p65 9 3/10/04, 5:59 AM
Black

World News



The Americas

Cyclists' Turf Battle

MEXICO - Motorcyclists beware, bicyclists will not stand your presence in bike lanes, especially on the recently created 11-mile bike path in Mexico City. *The Los Angeles Times* recently reported that four cyclists cornered a motorcyclist delivery man and handed him a mock ticket for riding in the bike path.

One of those cyclists was Ricardo Sala, a volunteer with Bicitekas. Mexico's main daily *Reforma* follows the group's activities, and the reporters bring their own bikes.

The main bicycle path traverses an old railway line. Mexican mayor Andres Manuel López Obrador recognised the benefit of the pressure of Bicitekas to transform the railway into a *ciclopista* before the invasion by poachers and street-pavers, says Sala.

"The new *ciclopistas* themselves, most of them not on the railway path, but near the part that goes through Chapultepec, the country's most famous city park, are lacking in connectivity and quality of design," Sala continues. "Just at the exit of Auditorio subway station, the sidewalk space for pedestrians has been ridiculously reduced to make way for a red painted *ciclopista*. A high employee of one of the construction firms contracted by the city government told me the *ciclopistas* were not designed as transport but merely as entertainment."

"Even if this were its purpose, the design is low quality: after the opening in late January the media has made fun of the 16% inclination the ramps have to get you to the top of the bridges — even the policemen assigned to the ciclopistas have to get down of their bikes to go up."

"We bicyclists in cities like Mexico City have to be the 'good cops,'" says Sala in reference to the bike path confrontation. "Our domain of public space, more on the road than pedestrians, more close to the skin than motorists, gives us the chance to set the example of how we should deal with each other on the streets every day."

- ***Car Busters, Feb. 27***

Woeep-Bloeep-Doeep

USA — Fledgling Manhattan-based composer Aaron Friedman decided he'd had enough after he was rudely awakened late one night for the umpteenth time by the *woeep-bloeep-doeep* of a car alarm. The soft-spoken musician started a campaign that could lead to a ban against loud car alarms in the city, replacing them with silent alternatives.

"People have learned to disregard alarms entirely because practically every time they go off there's no theft in progress," said Friedman, who launched a web site <www.silentmajorityny.org> to explain his cause.

It also includes wild tales that suggest Friedman is not alone in his frustration. Said one middle-aged lawyer:

"I am a fervent supporter of gun control and wish our laws were tougher and better enforced to keep weapons off the streets. There is one exception. I would like a big, nasty, mean, ugly automatic rifle or grenade launcher that I could fire at any car whose alarm blares repeatedly. I fantasise about blowing up car after car, right from the comfort of my living room. Boom! Boom!! Boom!!! I am a 52-year-old lawyer with a responsible job, a boring wardrobe and tri-focal glasses. But for car alarms, I am The Avenger."

- ***Reuters, Jan. 16***

"The Hunt" and "The Victory" by Jim Hoehnle.

Tooker Gomberg Dead at 48

CANADA - High-profile environmental and cycling activist Tooker Gomberg took his life on the early morning hours of Friday, March 5 in Halifax, Canada. Some readers will remember his articles in *Car Busters* magazine, or his "Greenspiration" tour of the world with his wife Angela Bischoff.

Gomberg founded one of Canada's first curbside recycling programs in Montreal and headed Edmonton's EcoCity Society. He was also elected to and served on Edmonton city council and cut a colourful figure as executive director of the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters. In 2000 Gomberg took on Toronto incumbent mayor Mel Lastman, in a mayoral campaign filled with humour and publicity stunts.

Gomberg became famous for his vociferous and unconventional sense of political theatre. Last spring, he was arrested at a rally protesting the war in Iraq when he used a megaphone without a permit. In 2002, he was dragged out by police from Toronto's Empire Club after shouting down Alberta Premier Ralph Klein during the premier's speech on why Alberta doesn't like the Kyoto accord.

He organised a group of protesters who threw pennies at the head of Imperial Oil during the company's annual general meeting to make the point it would cost only pennies per share to reduce greenhouse gases.

Gomberg's term on Edmonton City Council was marked by his advocacy of bicycling. He once aggravated his fellow councillors by chaining his bike to Edmonton's new city hall.

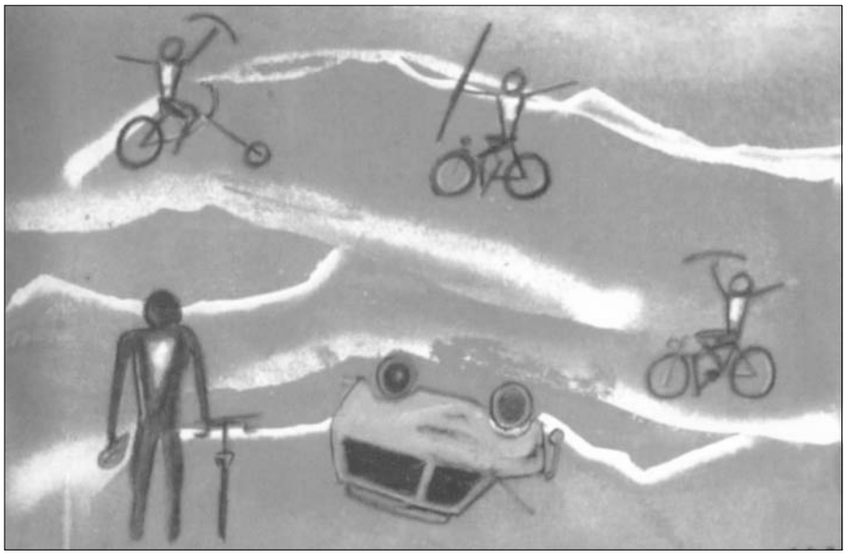
Environmental groups across Canada are planning memorials for Gomberg. As one activist wrote, "May he rest in peace. Or continue to disturb the peace... That would be fitting."

Police believe that Gomberg, who friends said had long battled depression, jumped off Halifax's Angus L. Macdonald Bridge, leaving a helmet and a bicycle behind. As of March 8, his body had not been found. He was 48 years old.

- ***Based on Canadian press articles***

CB#19_part1.p65 10 3/10/04, 6:00 AM
Black

Action!



Committee Against Oil Exploration

As part of its critique of the oil and car culture, to help bring on sustainable living, *Culture Change* has launched a campaign to help stop offshore oil drilling and protect ecosystems. Therefore, they have formed the Committee Against Oil Exploration (CAOE: "K-O"). A main function is to connect people to frontline grassroots groups working to stop new exploration for petroleum.

Most of us have heard that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, thought to be the US's grand hope for massive new oil, has been protected – for *now* (it would provide less than a year's worth of driving for the US vehicle fleet). It is worth noting that other parts of the country are still threatened, and grassroots groups need help in places such as the Rocky Mountain area. With lessened environmental regulation as industry's payoff after installing an Enron Government, maximum petroleum exploitation is sought everywhere possible.

- ***Culturechange.org/caoe***

Road Flash

Five acres of St Davids Wood in Blackwood, south Wales, is currently under threat of being trashed for the sake of an access road to an industrial park – and would already be gone if it wasn't for some hardy protesters and a ten-year local campaign which involved two High Court battles.

This camp needs urgent help to protect the site, but before you go down to the woods, you'd better leaf through the dusty pages of Hogwart's book on tree protest wizardry...

We now know that magic can happen in the woods, but things got truly surreal when Harry Potter weaved a spell into the story. This new development has come about because contractors Costain and the Caerphilly Borough Council have used the obscure "Harry Potter ruling" to secure a High Court civil injunction on the entire camp.

In the Harry Potter case, some of the kid wizard books went missing from the publishing company Bloomsbury and were then given to the press before publication. Because the company didn't know the specific names of the persons who had taken the books, they simply described them to the court.

The court then decided for the first time that persons described, rather than actually named, could be defendants to an injunction. This means an injunction can be served against anybody no names are needed so therefore any person entering or remaining in a specified area (the woodland at Blackwood, in this case) can be immediately removed.

Bindmans, the solicitors giving free legal advice to the camp, told *SchNEWS* "it's the first time the 'Harry Potter ruling' has been used against protesters."

People and climbing equipment are needed at the camp now. For a map and details visit <www.schnews.org.uk/pap/protestcamps.htm>.

- ***Schnews.org.uk, March 3***

Holding America Hostage to Oil

California human rights and environmental activists with Global Exchange and Rainforest Action Network daringly rappelled down a 32-story skyscraper near the LA Auto Show and unfurled a giant banner reading, "Ford: Holding America Hostage to Oil."

The unfurling of the banner occurred as people entered the Auto Show just blocks away. The banner was designed to raise public awareness about how Ford Motor Company and other auto manufacturers are needlessly keeping the US dependent on oil by refusing to increase the fuel economy of their vehicles.

The 40-foot by 60-foot banner featured an arm of a corporate executive holding a gas nozzle to the head of the Statue of Liberty as if ready to shoot the icon of freedom. Auto show attendees looked on in shock as activists unfurled the banner.

"Our own automakers are holding us hostage to oil," said Mike Brune, executive director of Rainforest Action Network. "Americans want energy independence and that means freedom from our oil addiction. Oil addiction endangers the lungs of the planet, our forests. It also endangers our economy. Ending America's addiction to oil is a matter of national security."
<www.jumpstartford.com>

- ***Indymedia.org, Jan.8***

World Naked Bike Ride
On June 12th, join us for a naked bike ride that will be happening in cities across the world. Seattle, Vancouver, London, Berlin, ++ many more
June 12th 2004
Http://www.worldnakedride.org
Join by visiting
http://www.WorldNakedRide.org
advert

CB#19_part1.p65 11 3/10/04, 6:00 AM
Black

Mobility at a

■ Chinese cities are often associated with masses of bike riders. However, non-motorised transportation in the process. Why has the car found such a

by Steven Logan

In 2004, China's cities are undergoing radical changes. The country has become an economic lighthouse for the world economy, and the car has become a symbol for this growth.

Agence France Presse reported that car sales in 2003 increased 84.7% over 2002, while car production topped two million. Similarly, auto imports also increased 84% as more foreign companies moved into the Chinese market.

In Beijing alone, car sales topped 400,000 for 2003. The car has been welcomed into China and the urban, and rural, landscape will never be the same again.

But even with the recent rise of the car's dominance at 12 vehicles per thousand people, China still has one of the world's lowest number of vehicles per capita. In their article, Zhao and Gallagher argue that China is still at a "relatively early stage in developing its automobile industry and thus it has unique opportunities."

China is still better off than everyone else. This has both a positive and negative aspect. The tradition of non-motorised transportation is still very much alive, but on the other hand, the low levels of car ownership mean there are still a lot of potential car buyers. As the statistics show, changes are happening rapidly, but China is still at a relatively early stage in developing its automobile industry and thus it has unique opportunities to develop along a more interesting path than the US, Canada or Australia.

The Bicycle City

One reason for this may lie with China's unique urban environment and its rich legacy of non-motorised transport. As recently as 1995, reports Jeff Kenworthy in his comprehensive study of transport in China, 65% of urban trips in Chinese cities were non-motorised. In 1994, there were approximately 7.9 million bikes in Beijing for a city of almost 7.3 million people, outstripping typical US car ownership rates.

Jean-François Doulet, who holds a doctorate in urban planning, has written extensively over the last ten years on car use in China. During the early to mid-'90s, he says, Chinese cities were functioning as "bicycle cities." Not only were bicycles an efficient and fast way of getting around, but a system existed that catered to the bicycle and included abundant parking, bicycle lanes on main roads and repair shops on street corners.

Mobility has an interesting history in the latter part of the twentieth century in the unique urban environments of Chinese cities. In the 1970s and '80s there was a low need for mobility as people lived, worked, and shopped in small areas managed and organised by unit works (called *danwei*, in Chinese). As the urban structure changed and expanded beyond the limits of the *danwei*, to what Doulet calls a post-Maoist city, bikes were the perfect answer.

However, as this integration gives way to a specialisation and separation of districts according to function – residential, business, industrial, etc. – the bike becomes less and less practical, both from a mobility and economic perspective, while the car becomes the symbol for progress and growth, making efforts at stemming its rise difficult. Although Gang Hu, who is currently completing his PhD on automobile use in China, insists that average car usage will be much lower than in Western cities, he also says that, "the number of private cars will increase dramatically in the next decades in China, particularly in medium to small cities, as it is much easier to get a [license] plate in these cities. There is no doubt that the demand is very strong in China, and will [get] stronger."

> ***"In the near future, China wants to have a national car industry that can be competitive on the international level."***

Hu was also responsible for collecting urban transport data, from cities such as Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai, for Kenworthy's 1995 comprehensive study of automobile usage mentioned above.

Pillar of Industry

Hu's prediction can be seen in light of the Chinese government's dubbing the car industry one of the four pillars of industry. Zhao and Gallagher write that the automobile sector will likely see growth of 20% to 30% annually for the next ten years and its contribution to total GDP growth could be as high as 20%. Zhao herself says that it is not feasible to limit car ownership as the "ever growing importance of the booming automotive industry to the national economy, as well as to local governments' fiscal revenues, will naturally compel policy-makers to think twice before adopting the measures."

"One person out of 22 works in the automotive industry and directly related sectors. ...There's little sign that the Chinese government is ready to limit the growth of its car market. On the contrary, the national government has and is issuing consumption policies in an effort to stimulate demand in the automobile sector and promote economic growth."

The People's Daily, the official newspaper of the Communist Party, echoes these policies. It reports that the national economy "demands that the auto industry become a pillar sector in order to maintain its brisk and healthy advance." The country already ranks fourth in the world behind the US, Germany and France in automotive production. Futhermore, the government claims that this booming production will be driven by domestic consumption, rather than external demand (as is the case in nearby Japan).

The paper quotes a retired worker from First Automotive Works, one of the government-owned

CB#19_part1.p65 12 3/10/04, 6:00 AM
Black

a Standstill

in the last decade the car has radically altered urban centres, marginalising welcoming home in China, and what might China's future hold in store?

automobile manufacturers, who says, "when I worked here 50 years ago, the factory was surrounded by patches of grassland. Through several decades of our efforts, it's transformed into a big group with international expertise. Now I'm glad to see the group [First Automotive Works] has linked its fate to China's progress into a more affluent society."

The problem, then, can be seen as one where the car industry becomes the indicator for the economy, and thus a symbol for progress, while car ownership is at the same time seen as what Zhou calls "a middle class status symbol." Consumption and production are closely linked as they feed off each other's energy. When the car industry is intimately linked with economic success, as both Kenworthy and Doulet mention, then there is an economic-ideological link between the automotive industry and development.

"If you create these kinds of expectations and try to accommodate the growth in infrastructure needed to feed habit," argues Jeff Kenworthy, "then, of course, you are going to have a culture that sees the car as a sign of progress."

> ***"The problem for China is how to deal with increasing dependence on the automobile to the detriment of other modes."***

These policies are partly linked to China's commitment to the WTO. By the end of this year, reports Xinhua news service, China will cancel its automotive import quotas. Furthermore, says Hu, the US provided China with a list of conditions and would only support its membership if it accepted these conditions. "Opening the financial market for private car loans to Western non-bank lending institutions is one of the conditions," says Hu.

Although foreign companies may be able to get their cars on the Chinese market, they cannot operate in China unless they are in a joint venture with a domestic company. In this case, their ownership in the joint company cannot exceed 50%.

Doulet says that "transfer of know-how and technology is a key element of the negotiations with foreign car companies. In the near future, China wants to have a national car industry that can be competitive on the international level."

Carfree or Gas-free?

It would appear that China is trying to achieve this level of competitiveness through the so-called environmentally friendly electric car. Automobile oil consumption is "a primary reason" for the increase in oil imports from 7.56 million tons in 1990 to 70 million tons in 2000, write Zhao and Gallagher. As transportation is a major contributor to global warming, they write, China's increase in car use could have devastating effects. Thus, research on cleaner cars is underway through Harvard University's Energy Technology Innovation Project on energy policy and technology development in China where Zhao, as project leader, is conducting research in collaboration with China's Ministry of Science and Technology, the China Automotive Research and Technology Center and Jiaotong University in Beijing.

There are many players involved here in an attempt to "help the Chinese government design policy mechanisms that can assist the automotive industry in adopting clean vehicle technologies (hybrid and fuel cell) to catch up with or leapfrog beyond the world technology level."

There have been various initiatives in this area such as the clean fuel programme or the establishment of the Transportation Programme of the China Sustainable Energy Programme in 1998. It has five objectives of which four are about putting money into developing cleaner cars (the other objective is dedicated to bus lanes like those in Curtiba or Bogotá). The Ministry of Science and Technology, in its latest five-year plan, committed US$100 million to researching and developing "advanced technology vehicles."

Although these initiatives address the worrisome reality of car exhaust emissions, they remain in line with the government's wish to hold up the automobile industry as a symbol of economic growth. However, non-polluting cars do not address the social pollution caused by the car.

"People are more concerned about the traffic problem caused by the growing number of cars in Beijing than the pollution," says Lian Congjie, director of one of China's foremost NGOs, Friends of Nature. "In rush hours, cars may be jammed on the roads for hours. On some occasions, the traffic jams may even block the pedestrian and bicycle paths, so... nobody can move."

Even with the traffic problems in Beijing, attempts by the municipal government to limit car ownership have failed, says Zhao, because of both industry and consumer opposition. Shanghai is the only Chinese city to limit new car ownership, through controls on license plates. And even then, people can go to neighbouring Hangzhou and buy their car there. However, Zhao says that in July 2003 the mayor announced that he would "gradually loosen restrictions on the purchase of private vehicles in the long run but, further restrict the use of cars in downtown areas."

Still, restricting car use would simply be a quick fix for a much deeper problem. Haixao Pan, a professor of urban planning at Tongji University in Shanghai, believes that one of the key issues for urban planners in China is the conflict between the developer looking for short-term profit, which leads to high density and congestion, and the more long-term rigid urban planning system. Because of the pressure to keep up with China's rate of development, says Pan, officials are "ambitious" and want to change things overnight.

"Economic liberalisation is placing enormous pressure on the land use controls previously >>

CB#19_part1.p65 13 3/10/04, 6:00 AM
Black

exerted by the planning system, and these controls are not very well-coordinated with transport," writes Kenworthy.

"They need more professional training," says Pan, "especially in urban planning."

Do As We Say, Not As We Do

Part of this training is coming with international partnerships.

"China is now at a turning point regarding the process of motorisation," says Doulet. Chinese people are aware that the "all-automobile strategy" is not a solution, and they are seeking answers.

Swiss planners from Zurich worked in Kunming for several years and were successful in, among other things, setting up a busway system and working on heritage perservation in urban centres. Furthermore, there was a conference in Kunming on urban transport and sustainability.

"Kunming has a Sister City relationship with Zurich," says Kenworthy, "and the conference had high level support from the mayor's office."

Doulet and Pan lead the China programme of *Institut pour la Ville en Mouvement*, which seeks to improve mobility conditions in Chinese cities.

"Critical to the future will be the institutional capacity and willingness of China's planners and decision-makers to control the use of land in ways they have done in the past and to better link urban development with improved public transport systems," writes Kenworthy.

For the time being, the planning tradition is moving in the direction of planning for the automobile. The average urban density of Chinese cities is around ten times that of US or Australian cities, and over 2.5 times that of Western European cities, notes Kenworthy in his comprehensive study on China.

"It would take a total reconstruction programme to adapt them to the automobile on the scale of US and Australian cities," he writes.

As the *danwei* would suggest, Chinese cities were not built for the automobile. Thus with an urban planning strategy that does not favour the car, there is the possibility for more creative solutions. This is precisely why the economists and industry people should not be making all the decisions, says Doulet. "The automobile issue is too sensitive to be left in the hands of economic and industry experts."

The complex way in which the car insinuates itself into the built environment contributes to its alteration, necessitates the involvement of architects, urban planners, sociologists and NGOs.

The fear expressed by most of the people interviewed for this article is summed up by Kenworthy in his essay "Transport and Urban Form in Chinese Cities":

"The problem for China, and indeed all other nations, is how to deal with the issues raised by mass car ownership, and increasing dependence on the automobile to the detriment of other modes."

No Bikes Allowed!

The current urban development – where decisions regarding urban space are left up to the central government, in partnership with developers and the auto industry – is leading to the destruction of the mixed-use neighbourhoods.

Although Kenworthy acknowledges that "sub-standard housing conditions" in these neighbourhoods is part of the reason for new development, he adds that "the new housing environments are so sterile and devoid of street culture that they are not just replacing sub-standard housing, they are destroying key cultural pillars that are based around rich street life and... community and sense of belonging in neighbourhoods."

Bike bans on Chinese city streets are becoming increasingly common. In an effort to accommodate the growing number of cars on the road, bikes are being forced out of bike lanes and onto side streets. City officials in Shanghai have banned bikes from its main roads. Zimin Zhao says that, because of the limited amount of space on the road, city leaders believe that the bicycle is responsible for slowing down traffic and thus by banning bicycles the government has decided to give more space to buses and cars.

Similarly, in Guangzhou, a World Bank-funded programme suggested restricting bike use on major roads, while at the same time, improving conditions for cyclists on parallel bike routes. According to the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), the proposed restrictions were imposed, but the conditions on the bike route did not improve. The construction of an overpass along the restricted streets did nothing to help the problem, as it does not allow bicycle use. This result, reports ITDP, goes against the World Bank's Sustainable Transport: Priorities for Policy Reform, which calls for "Eliminating the Impediments to Non-Motorised Transport."

It is then no surprise that bicycle travel in Guangzhou "has fallen from 33% of all trips in 1995 to less than 20% today," reports Walter Hook in the Fall 2002 issue of *Sustainable Transport*. What is more, the Guangzhou Motor Group Company-Honda joint venture, which produces cars and motorcycles, has taken over the Guangzhou-based Five Rams bicycle company.

Where's the Bus?

The Shanghai bike ban is only a short-term solution, says Zhao, and the only way to solve the congestion problem is to attract the public by building a "rapid, convenient, and comfortable public transit system (such as a bus rapid transit system)."

An international conference on sustainable multi-modal transportation was recently held in Shanghai, and Zhao and her colleagues proposed a transport model that "emphasised public transit systems and allowed [for the existence] of bicycles and motorised scooters.

CB#19_part1.p65 14 3/10/04, 6:00 AM
Black

The current problem is the bleak state of public transport in China. In 1995, according to Kenworthy, per capital spending on public transport in Chinese cities was the lowest in the world. In most cases, the money was invested in roads. In Guangzhou, for example, the road network has been expanding at 9% a year.

Outside of North America, China had the highest ratio of road investment to public transport investment.

There are few alternatives for those who want to both live carfree and advocate for carfree living. The reality of the present times in Beijing, says Congjie, whose views are his own and not those of Friends of Nature, is that "it is almost impossible to have a campaign against private car use. Because the public transportation in Beijing is so undeveloped there are very few alternatives."

Environmental NGOs in China, writes Peter Ho, senior programme officer for China in the Evironmental Policy Group at Wageningen Univesity in the Netherlands, "lack both the opportunity and the immediate urgency to openly confront the central government."

"It is difficult for organisations to mobilise nationally, as environmental NGOs are fragmented and localised," he writes.

Conclusion

Lian Congjie and his wife do not have a car and he rides his bike to work everyday, as it is not far from his home. However, if the place is far, he says, they take a taxi.

"We seldom take the bus or trolley [because it is] too crowded to have a seat on board."

So, public transport *is* being used, but if "the crowded conditions and slow and unreliable services of public transport systems based mainly on buses" do not improve, writes Kenworthy, then riders will readily switch to motorcycles and cars as their incomes grow. The uniqueness of the Chinese built environment and its legacy of non-motorised transportation will only continue if the car, the road and the freeway stop dictating urban planning policy.

If a diverse range of groups can come together around the common cause of opposing the industry-government hold on urban development and propose creative solutions during this critical time, then perhaps Pan's ideal city can become a reality: "The city will be safe and liveable, keeping its heritage. . . [There will be a] dynamic city centre and diversity of life, [in] harmony with nature." ■

References

Jeff Kenworthy and Gang Hu. "Transport and Urban Form in Chinese Cities." From the authors.

Jeff Kenworthy and Craig Townsend. "An International Comparative Perspective on Motorisation in Urban China." From the authors.

Walter Hook. "The Sound of China's Bicycle Industry." *Sustainable Transport*, Fall 2002, ITDP.

John Ernst and Walter Hook. *Making World Bank Transport Lending Sustainiable: Lessons From the Guangzhou City Center Transport Project.* ITDP, August, 2001.

Peter Ho. "Greening Without Conflict?: Environmentalism, NGOs and Civil Society in China." *Development and Change*, Vol. 32 (2001), 893-921.

Jimin Zhao and Kelly Sims Gallagher Clean. "Vehicle Development in China." *Sinosphere Journal*, Vol. 6 (March 2003), pp. 20-28.

Photographs

Pages 12-13: Carfree zone in Beijing by Manfred Breithaupt/ GTZ. Traffic Jam in Kunming by Jeff Kenworthy.
Page 14: The Repair Shop by Wang Wenlan/Cycle And Recycle Calendar, Cyclists' waiting in Kunming by Jeff Kenworthy. Cyclist and pedestrians in Suzhou by Karl Fjellstrom/GTZ.

Tibet, Roads and the Propaganda of Development

The story of roads in Tibet is the story of invasion, exploitation and control, where the official rhetoric stands in sharp contrast to reality.

"The logic of the Chinese government in relation to Tibet is the same used by western potencies during the colonial period," writes the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Development (TCHRD). "Developed societies invade backward societies to bring them progress and development, but when we talk about progress in Tibet we have to keep in mind what is progress, who benefits and who pays."

The People's Republic of China government claims that, through its much-heralded "Western Development Programme" it is greatly subsidising Tibetan economic growth with billions of dollars of investment. But where is this money going?

The large, cost-intensive projects directed to the construction of roads, besides having a negative impact on the fragile Tibetan environment, have little effect on the lives of the common Tibetan. The roads are very useful for the Chinese army, and for the Chinese immigrants who keep arriving every day attracted by government incentives and to facilitate the exploitation of the Tibetan natural resources. The roads exist, but there is no transport system for the local population.

In the 1980s, the Chinese government decided "to integrate Tibet into China's economy and social structure." Roads are key to this, as the main arteries that plug previously autonomous Tibet into the centralised economy of China. In 1994 the Third National Forum on Work in Tibet decided "to open Tibet's door wide to inner parts of the country," and population transfer through road building is a central aspect of this.

"The much-heralded, Chinese-sponsored infrastructure projects such as highways... have mainly been built to facilitate this settlement, fulfill military objectives and to expedite resource extraction."

The roads are also built in part through excessive taxation where "poor Tibetans are subjected to 27 times the tax rate of non-poor in rural China." The Chinese government justifies this by claiming that the locals are the ones benefiting. However, according to TCHRD, the profits "largely benefit government officials, local elites and well-connected entrepreneurs from China's affluent coastal regions. The main products... aim at sending western resources to the east."

As well as high taxation, Tibetans are forced to work on the roads without pay, at the risk of fines and imprisonment. "We were made to do labour on road and bridge building," reported Lhamo from Topthi Village.

"Each family had to send one person or pay fines of 50 yuan per day... [and so] everybody found a way to send one person as the fines were too high." This is a common story. The 18-year-old farmer Dawa from Kyirong claimed that in his village "everyone between the ages of 18 and 60 must work more than 20 days a year without pay," and if sick they must "work two days for every day you are absent."

Once again, this violates international law. Article 8(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights prohibits forced labour. China justifies it as "punishment" or "voluntary labour."

But what about the land these roads are built on? Officially, all land is owned by the Communist Party and so farmers and nomads that have used the land for centuries are now using state land at the state's convenience, to be taken away at any moment (despite this once again being against international law). Nyima, a 27 year-old nomad from Nagchu County, reported in 2000 that "if Tibetan land falls on a road construction area, the land is taken away without payment. This is a common practice."

Other testimony supports this. Dorje Rabten, a 25 year old from Deva, Gansu, stated that a road built in 1998 took Tibetan farmland without compensation. Also, Tamding, a farmer from Haiyen County, claimed that all families in his area whose land fell on the road had their land seized without compensation and had to move to the town for work.

So, the roads bring the army, settlers (economic, cultural, political and military subjugation) and subsidised imports (ending previous food autonomy), and extract resources (benefiting China at the cost of ecological destruction in Tibet). This is paid partly through excessive taxes of Tibetans, use of their forced labour, and built on land taken without compensation. ■

- ***Joe Dodds***

Information obtained from personal discussions with exiles in India and Nepal, and from TCHRD: Annual Report 2002. Human Rights Situation in Tibet, Impoverishing Tibetans, Economic Status of Tibetans in Tibet, <www.tchrd.org>.

The Automobile and *Décroissance*

■ The word *décroissance* can mean decrease, de-growth, going smaller or reversing growth. In this excerpt from his recent article, Cheynet suggests we turn the notion of progress, accepted by the technological elite, against itself.

by Denis Cheynet
translated from the French by Michèle Pixa

Faced with the problems created by the automobile, the brave knights of the technical world promise an entire arsenal of solutions that would permit us to scientifically remedy all of the ills without calling into question the way of life on which the automobile is based.

Automobile violence will be reduced thanks to the development of automatic driving systems, more emergency airbags, stronger and more efficient brakes, tension-sensitive seatbelts, all safety systems for which research is taking place and contributing to the general improvement of our well-being.

Pollution will be reduced thanks to the elimination of old, worn-out vehicles and through the instigation of draconian limits on emissions.

The problem of diminishing oil and gas reserves will be solved by the replacement of the combustible engine with a "clean" electric or hydrogen engine. Let's note in passing that noise pollution is rarely evoked, visual pollution even less, and social pollution not at all.

All of these technical solutions are completely ineffective for several reasons. The number of vehicles increases more quickly than the technical progress made. These improvements are not enough to make the automobile globally sustainable and are much too insufficient to allow each woman and man on Earth to possess one.

Even if the negative effects were cut in half, the car would continue to kill, pollute, exhaust natural resources and make life difficult for millions of humans. A "clean" car does not exist and will never exist. As of today, there is no energy source that does not pollute. Electricity is produced either from fossil fuels or from nuclear energy. Electricity is dependent on oil, gas, coal or uranium reserves. Electricity produces greenhouse gases or radioactive waste. Hydrogen is produced either from hydrocarbons or electrical energy.

Certain scientists retort that "of course we'll find something," that "the human being has an extraordinary evolutionary capacity," and that "technical progress will allow us to find a completely non-polluting and infinite source of energy." This is very beautiful, but stems more from faith than a real scientific acuity and rational analysis of the facts.

The problems created by individual vehicles should be resolved in a philosophical and political way. We should accept our responsibilities as humans and face our destiny, and stop constantly referring to the wizard of technology. Let's take for example the use of the bicycle in the city. We can promote its use in two different ways.

The first solution, the technical one, consists of building numerous cycle paths without altering the space reserved for automobiles. An unfortunate consequence of this solution will be that drivers will get used to being the sole users of the roadway, making cyclists an endangered species for which a nature preserve (the bicycle paths) will be set aside to save a few surviving specimens.

> ***"Even if the negative effects were cut in half, the car would continue to kill, pollute, exhaust natural resources and make life difficult for millions of humans."***

The second solution, the political one, consists in considerably reducing the space reserved for automobiles and eliminating parking spaces, so that driving a car becomes so unbearable that the automobile is considered an intrusion into urban space. The roadway will be reallocated to cyclists and public transport.

Of the two above solutions, the first will always be preferred because, even if it doesn't solve much, it is easily put into place and gives the illusion of contributing to a good cause. The second solution is rarely put into practice because it necessitates a re-examination of our ways of life, a fundamental reform of our way of thinking and is a blow to the sacrosanct modern comfort which we, privileged Westerners, will never give up. Finding solutions to problems caused by the automobile can only be achieved by reducing our energy consumption and reducing the number of kilometres travelled in these motorised steel boxes. We prefer to continue to think, or to pretend to think, that technology will come to our rescue on its proud steed and will allow us to never, ever question our way of life.[1]

Décroissance of the Transport Flow

The number of trucks on European roads increases every year. More highway construction has been planned in order to deal with this increasing traffic flow. Once again, a technical solution will ameliorate the symptom (too many trucks on the roads) instead of addressing the cause of the problem (our way of life is such that more and more trucks travel on the roads). Likewise, as far as the automobile goes, we should address the cause of the problem, which is the fact that more and more trips by car are necessary in life. Why can't students live without a car anymore? Why do certain people travel more than 60 km to work?

We should not only replace these car trips as soon as we can with other modes of transport more respectful of the environment, but also reduce the number [and distance] of trips. Our freedom is important, but it has limits. It stops where the possibility of every human to have a decent life begins, whether it is here or on the other side of the world, today or in 15,000 years. Walking and cycling are two means of transport that we can use and abuse without limit other than the limits imposed by our own bodies. However, if every inhabitant on Earth went about and made the trip from Paris to Lyon by TGV [high-speed train] every single day, the result wouldn't be much better than it is with the automobile. In transporting one person from Paris to Lyon, a TGV consumes 12.5 dep (the equivalent of one kilo of oil), while a car consumes 30 dep.[2]

Thus a TGV uses 41% of the energy used by a car per person transported. If we put trucks on trains, if we replaced our trips by car with trips by TGV and, at the same time multiplied the distance of our trip by 2.5, then we have not gained anything.

In order to leave the automobile ideology, we should follow the logic of a widespread reduction of all traffic flow. This means a re-localising of the economy and trade, a limitation on the size of businesses, with the dismantling of large supermarkets for the benefit of local commerce.

Let's take the structure of our cities, for example. The districts are differentiated: residential district, business district, shopping area. The distance needed to travel to do one's errands is increasing. Businesses are being set up on the peripheries of the city, where the land is cheaper. Fashion boutiques are concentrated in the very centre of the city, with neighbourhoods dying. The ultimate result of this evolution is American cities such as Los Angeles, which stretch out over 200 km or, Detroit which has only 4.5 million inhabitants, but occupies more than 10,000 km^2.

Multinational corporations employ hundreds of specialists at the same location. Relocalizing the economy consists in reducing the maximum

The complete text *of this article, in both English and French, can be found in the "Freesources" section of Car Busters.org (under Resource Centre).*

size of businesses in favour of structures on a human scale according to a division of competencies. Currently, business profits are made either to the detriment of other peoples whom we reduce to slavery,[3] or to the detriment of the natural resources that the Earth provides (the oil that permits mechanisation).

While decreasing the amount of traffic flow is important, so is reducing the speed of this traffic. The most often-used argument to justify the use of a car is the speed at which it allows us to get from one point to another. We can quit the automobile by refusing to adopt this logic of ever-increasing speed in favor of modes of transportation that are slower but ecologically sustainable, such as the bicycle or the train. And once we are in our seat reading a good Barjavel book, we'll have all the leisure time to realise that all the "lost" time spent reading in this train is in fact compensated by the time we saved by not having to work to pay for a car.

Décroissance and quitting the automobile are two related methods of proceeding. Giving up the automobile and reducing the amount and the speed of traffic flow are necessary in order to reduce energy consumption to a level that will allow us to reach an equilibrium between energy consumed and renewable energy.[4]

Quitting the Automobile by Redefining our Goals

Quitting the automobile means putting much more into question than different kinds of transportation. It means putting into question our ways of life, the structure of our society and the goals of this structure. Economic growth and the constant rise in our standard of living are not real goals. Good human relationships, happiness, figuring out how the entire world can get enough to eat, are goals. At a more local level, the objective of having the biggest and most powerful car could be replaced by the objective of experiencing good moments by travelling by bike on roads free of automobiles.

If our objective is *décroissance*, the redistribution of resources and the preservation of the environment, the act of winning the Formula 1 race will no longer be glorified as it is today, nor will mechanics students get a sparkle in their eye when they talk about the latest 8-cylinder motor, and the act of owning a powerful and speedy car will no longer be a means of gaining admiration.

The automobile will seem, on the contrary, completely backward, useless and ugly, since it runs counter to the preservation of human life.

Our behaviour is rooted in the direction that our society takes. If we want infinite growth, if we place economics and technology over human life, we will have a world full of cars that pollute and are disrespectful to the human being. If, on the contrary, we prefer to put human beings and the nature that surrounds them first, we will abandon these horrible motorised steel boxes that pollute our lives, and we will lower our economic standard of living and increase our interpersonal, social and human standard of living.

Quitting the Automobile with Nonviolence

Redefining our objectives – individual or collective – also means rejecting power, i.e. rejecting the domination of human being ate the roadway by driving a 4x4 and means refusing to feed the international need for oil. By demonising Americans for having declared war against Saddam Hussein, we are trying to free ourselves of guilt, forgetting that we Europeans have the same way of life as Americans. European power – the common interests of Russia, France and Germany – is thrown against American power. Unfortunately, the results are the same whether it is Exxon-Mobil/Esso or TotalElfFina exploiting Iraqi oil.

The rejection of power translates as the refusal to impose on others what they don't want. In imposing the automobile, we are indirectly imposing war, but we also force out children to stay home, as the roads have become too dangerous for them to play in. We force cyclists to wear a helmet, and (perhaps soon) armor and padding to protect themselves from danger. This stage is perhaps the most difficult to achieve because it forces us to master our animal aggression and our hunger for power and let our humanity triumph over them. ■

[1] "Our standard of living is not negotiable." George Bush Sr.
[2] Source: Center of Technical and Industrial Scientific Culture, Grenoble, France.
[3] Cf. Naomi Klein, No Logo and Roger Moore, Downsize This!
[4] Wind enengy, solar energy, and other renewable energies directly dependent on the energy supplied by the sun.

graphic: Raoul Anvélaut

Biking with DJ Liquid A

by Tanja Eskola

Roman Truksa, aka DJ Liquid A, is one of the most respected djs in the Czech Republic. He has excellent taste and sense of atmosphere when it comes to music, but also to transportation and ecology.

He blames himself for not participating in any Critical Masses yet, but very likely he has been out there smoothing the way for other bikers, since the man has been biking for the past 15 years.

"It's a shame that I've started biking and taking an interest in environmental issues as a whole at such an old age [42], but I guess some things take time," DJ Liquid A grins.

Well, it might have taken him over 30 years to make his transformation into a DJ, but like they say – some things are worth waiting for.

Even if some of Liquid A's colleagues are young enough to be his children, not to mention his audience, his mentor-ish or even father figure-ish presence has been highly appreciated in Prague's club scene for the past 15 years. During those years he has adopted a carfree lifestyle which seems to fit him like a glove even though the first impression after hearing his occupation might be different.

Nowadays clubs have their own turntables, so all a DJ needs is his own set of records when having a gig. The amount of records Liquid A plays per night, out of his collection of four thousand vinyls, fits easily into a backpack. While biking, he doesn't have to worry about finding parking spaces and a bike also frees him from the timetables of public transportation which can be quite an advantage considering his working hours.

"For me biking is the most convenient form of transport," he clarifyes. "Having a car here in Prague would be useles, even if people seem to think otherwise. The amount of cars is so high here and increasing all the time," says Liquid A shaking his head.

"Czech people are trying to justify their consumption with our national history of Communism. We are entitled to waste now 'cause we didn't have the opportunity to do it then. I don't know what it takes to get rid of that attitude. Maybe something really bad has to happen before we realise that we can't go on like this forever," Liquid A states.

A man is what he talks about: The first thing he does when we enter his room is to put on some music. That's no surprise, but what kind of music: "Look at these vinyls! They are in perfect condition. I found them on the street [in a dumpster]. The most horrible Czech pop music from the '80s." And cover pictures tell it all. Glitter and glints, but apparently not even kitch enough for the person who throw them out in the first place. "You wouldn't believe what good stuff people throw away these days..."

Even though Liquid A says he hated discos in the '80s, his passion for music was more than a hobby. He used to record tapes for his friends to share his latest discoveries, but if someone would have called him a DJ, he would have laughed his head off. But then again, life is like a box of chocolate. Something changed, and Liquid A's former occupation as a liquidator for a geophysical company had to step aside. The beginning of the decade was also a new beginning for Liquid A. After almost two years in the United States, in San Francisco, he came back to The Czech Republic with a new profession, name and ideology that consisted of biking, recycling and music.

Liquid A sounds like a humble biker who respects pedestrians. According to him bikers and pedestrians are on the same side – subjected to the dominance of cars – and that's why they should honour each other.

"It's not right if we bikers take power from pedestrians like cars have taken it from us all. Lots of people are afraid of bikers who ride incautiously or too fast. That's no way to promote biking."

When speaking about Prague he almost gets agitated. Everybody should be able to feel that they are safe in the streets and that also includes bikers. Liquid A adds that there is a reason why bikers are sometimes called body part donors.

"There are careless drivers and it's understandable that some people might be scared of biking if they have to do it at the expense of their health." And even if people aren't afraid of getting hurt, they seem to be scared of physical exercise, he points out. "People aren't used to getting physically tired anymore. They don't need to do that, so why do it?" he asks.

For Liquid A, biking is also about keeping himself fit and healthy. Instead of going to the gym he just takes his bike and rides. "Maybe sweating is not so fashionable," he laughs.

Apart from biking travelling is also one of Liquid A's hobbies, but not traveling in ordinary way, but via books. Books take him to places where he can't go by bike.

"Yeah. I've been in many distant places. This is something that I would call 'environmental travelling.' Seriously speaking, for many people, me included, travelling is luxurious. I get to visit places without having to buy tickets."

And according to Liquid's recipe, you don't even need to buy books, because lots of his books were also found in dumpsters.

Liquid A says it makes him sad that on a daily basis we can read in magazines how people, mostly celebrities, present their fancy lifestyles with their fancy cars.

"Critical Masses are great, but as well as promoting biking to ordinary people, we also need examples, like some cool people biking who would show others that biking is a cool activity."

Well, I think we have one already. ■

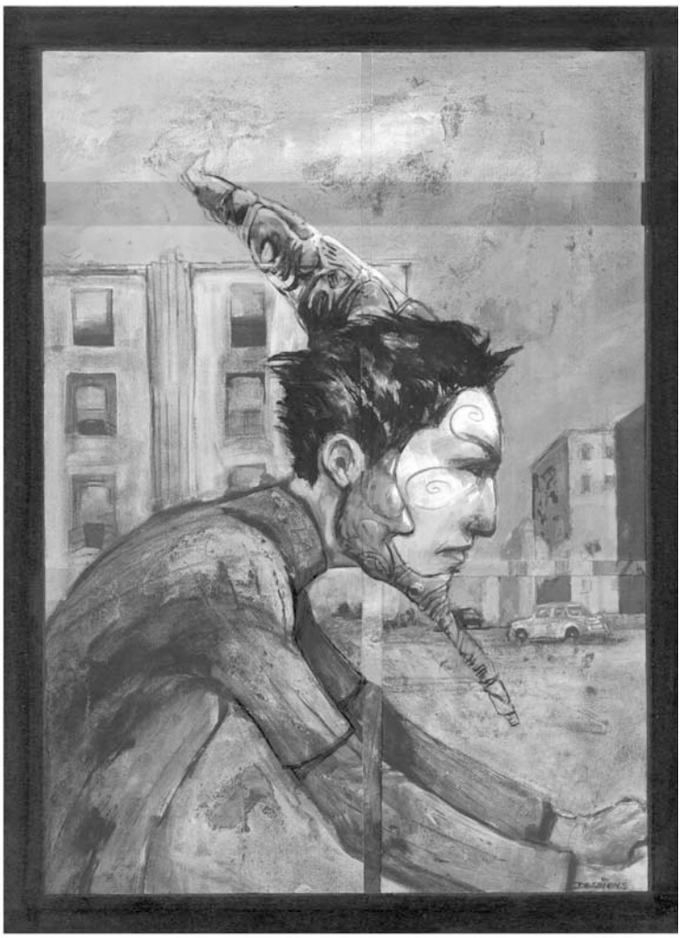
CB#19_part2.p65 18 3/10/04, 6:18 AM
Black

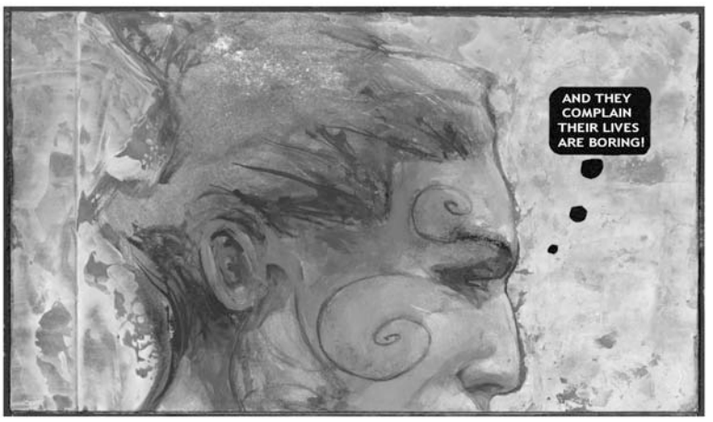
Auto Bio

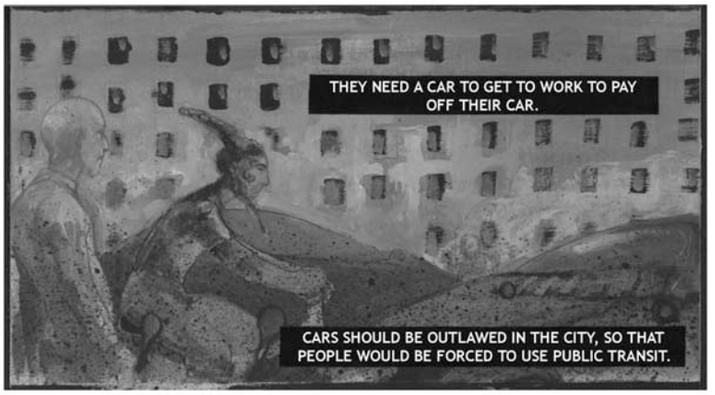
■ Cycling in the urban landscape, a cartoon by Dominique Desbiens (translated from the French by Halina Carter)

Dominique Desbiens is currently working in Montréal, Québec as an illustrator, painter, wall muralist, and sometimes writer, while also editing the journals *Exil* and *Havre Exquis*. He has been making comic books for ten years. He is a cyclist and walker only.

CB#19_part2.p65 19 3/10/04, 6:18 AM
Black





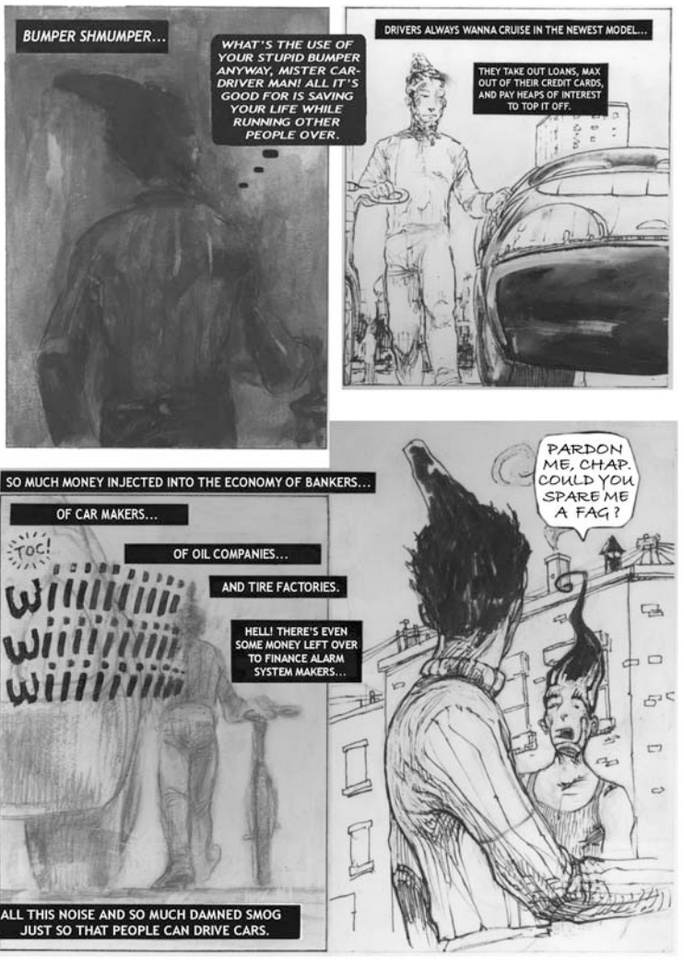

THEY NEED A CAR TO GET TO WORK TO PAY OFF THEIR CAR.
CARS SHOULD BE OUTLAWED IN THE CITY, SO THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE FORCED TO USE PUBLIC TRANSIT.

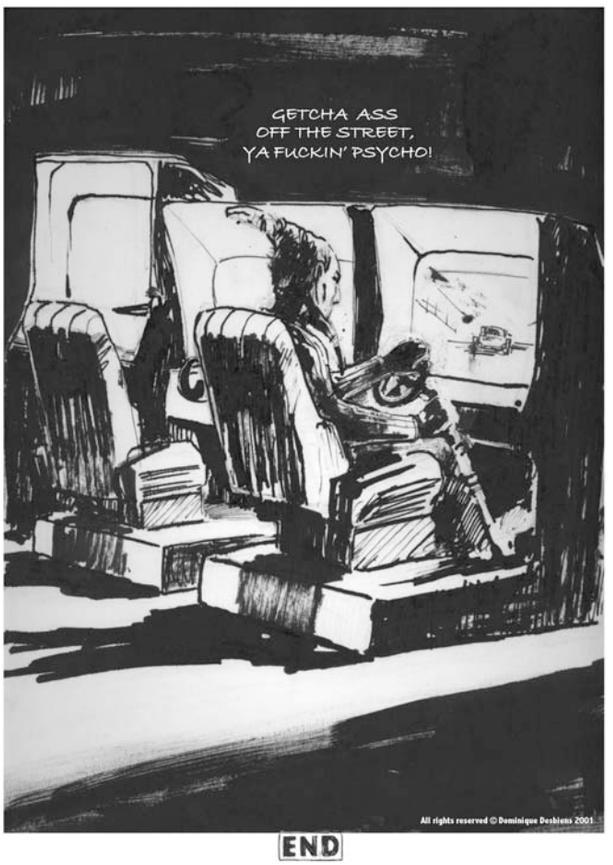
THEY SIT IN THEIR CAR, THEN IN THEIR OFFICE, THEN THEY'RE BACK IN THEIR CAR JUST TO FINISH OFF THE DAY SITTIN' IN FRONT OF THE TUBE.

VROOM!
SUDDENLY, A CAR DOOR SENDS HIM FLYING FACE FIRST ONTO THE CONCRETE.
TAKLANG
MIRRORS AREN'T JUST FOR POWDERIN' YOUR NOSE, YA BASTARD!

WHATEVER...
WHY DON'T YA GO WELD SOME NAILS ONTO YOUR DOOR WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, WANKER!
MIGHT AS WELL USE THE SIDEWALK.
MAN! THIS PLACE COULD SURE USE SOME MORE TREES.
MEEEP!
MEEEP!
THEY SHOULD PLANT A LOT MORE OF 'EM WITH ALL THE SHIT WE BREATHE IN.
OOOPS!
BIKES BELONG ON THE STREET!
LOUT! BRUTE! MANIAAAC!

YEAH, YEAH! I'LL GO GET MY ASS RUN OVER JUST TO MAKE YOU HAPPY, YA CLOWN!
I GUESS I'LL WALK...
THE DAMN LAW PROHIBITS ME FROM RIDIN' ON THE SIDEWALK, ANYWAYS.
BIIIIIIIP
BANG
HEY! HOW ABOUT YOU LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING, FUCKING ASSHOLE!
MY BUMPER BETTER BE OKAY, YOU DENSE PIECE OF SHIT!
YA SHOULDN'T HAVE HIT THE BREAKS SO DAMN FAST, YOU FREAK!


BUMPER SHMUMPER...
WHAT'S THE USE OF YOUR STUPID BUMPER ANYWAY, MISTER CAR-DRIVER MAN! ALL IT'S GOOD FOR IS SAVING YOUR LIFE WHILE RUNNING OTHER PEOPLE OVER.
DRIVERS ALWAYS WANNA CRUISE IN THE NEWEST MODEL...
THEY TAKE OUT LOANS, MAX OUT OF THEIR CREDIT CARDS, AND PAY HEAPS OF INTEREST TO TOP IT OFF.
SO MUCH MONEY INJECTED INTO THE ECONOMY OF BANKERS...
OF CAR MAKERS...
TOC!
OF OIL COMPANIES...
AND TIRE FACTORIES.
HELL! THERE'S EVEN SOME MONEY LEFT OVER TO FINANCE ALARM SYSTEM MAKERS...
PARDON ME, CHAP. COULD YOU SPARE ME A FAG?
ALL THIS NOISE AND SO MUCH DAMNED SMOG JUST SO THAT PEOPLE CAN DRIVE CARS.



END

CB#19_part2.p65 21 3/10/04, 6:18 AM
Black

The Great Debate: SUVs

■ The cars we love to hate. But why?

They're big, they're dangerous, they guzzle gas like an alcoholic tips back shots of whiskey, and it's become almost a trend to hate them. Americans call them sports utility vehicles, in Germany it's *Geländewagen*, Czechs call them *terenní* (i.e., "all-terrain") vehicles and to the French they're *les quatre-quatres* (4x4).

But almost all over the world, they are also known as SUVs.

Since SUVs are less fuel-efficient than other modern cars, environmental activists have launched campaigns against them. Friends of the Earth has a special anti-SUV website, Suv.org, which is quite typical of most environmental anti-SUV sites. They point out the vehicles' poor fuel efficiency, safety concerns (2,000 people would still be alive if their vehicles had been hit by a heavy car instead of an SUV, the site says), and call them "roadhogs."

And it's not just environmentalists. Even pro-car websites, such as www.cartalk.com, often come out against the SUV. Arguments vary – some people object to their size, others to the fuel efficiency, and still others seem to object to their status as status symbols.

A recent book, *High and Mighty* by *New York Times* reporter Keith Bradsher, claims that SUV drivers tend to be aggressive males, and this news was immediately picked up by anti-SUV people everywhere to claim that SUV drivers "drive like assholes" (as one person vents on his Internet pages).

There is no doubt these cars are a major phenomenon of car culture as well as anti-car culture. But, as *Car Busters* contributor Stephan von Pohl argues, has this focus on SUVs allowed other car drivers to smugly continue to pollute the air and clog our roads, all the while feeling that they are "environmental" because they drive a normal car? Or is this anti-SUV movement a good thing on its own, because it fulfills a small niche in the larger cause? We asked Drew Agras, who runs the <www.idontcareabouttheair.com> website, to offer a counterpoint.

Stephan von Pohl: Why This SUV Obsession?

Several years ago, I first saw a bumper sticker on the rear of an SUV that said simply "I'm Changing the Climate. Ask Me How." At first I thought that car drivers' arrogance had reached new heights, and this one was proudly saying that he didn't care about global warming. There was a website on the sticker, and when I looked it up I discovered that the car had been the victim of a bumper sticker vigilante – someone had placed the sticker on the car in protest of its low fuel efficiency.

I liked the idea. After all, the cars were big and they did pollute a lot. Over time, however, hating SUVs has become almost as big a lifestyle as owning one. Why focus on just one type of car? It allows people who still drive to shun any responsibility they should feel for polluting the air and making our cities unlivable. And while many people doing the stickering are probably carfree, it's not unusual to meet someone with a strong hatred of SUVs who drives a ten-year-old car that probably pollutes just as much. Sure, a Ford Expedition gets 16 miles per gallon, but so does a ten-year-old station wagon – no matter how many "I love the Earth" stickers you put on it.

> ***"Hating SUVs has become almost as big a lifestyle as owning one. People complain about SUVs, but they themselves continue to drive."***

Anti-SUV arguments tend to fall into three categories. First, some people hate them because they are big. This is a purely emotional response to the SUV drivers perceived arrogance ("roadhog"). Second, there's the safety argument. SUVs make the roads less safe for the rest of us and because of their high centre of gravity, they tend to roll over and are therefore not very safe for their passengers, either.

Then there's the fuel-efficiency. The focus on fuel-efficency and outdated regulations addresses only a small segment of the car industry. Yes, the "SUV loophole" allowing these cars to be treated as trucks should be removed. But all cars should be more fuel-efficient, and even then they cause other problems.

Yes, we can't fight all battles at once. We do what we can. Most of us recycle. We worry about endangered species and care about the ozone layer. But I'm a little worried that many people think that our lives will be much improved by increasing fuel efficiency standards. With more and more cars hitting the roads each year, our air will only get slightly better at the rate we are going.

Unless we start doing something about cars, however, (not just their pollution, but their ever-increasing numbers) the *human* environment – our towns and cities – will only get worse.

Fuel efficiency or not, a car is a car. They all pollute, even if some pollute more than others. And the fuel efficiency argument overlooks all the

CB#19_part2.p65 22 3/10/04, 6:18 AM
Black

other problems associated with car use. If one of them is parked on the sidewalk, cuts me off when I'm on my bike, or comes roaring down my street at twice the speed limit, it doesn't really matter if it's a hybrid, a 4x4, or a compact. What's more, car use promotes car-centred planning, which leads to suburban sprawl, narrow sidewalks, and dispersed communities.

If you're going to sticker one kind of car, you should sticker them all.

- Stephan von Pohl is a Contributing Editor to Car Busters *magazine.*

Drew Agras: You Have to Pick Your Fight

Activism comes in many shades. *Car Busters* is trying to make a fundamental change in the way humans live – wow, that's a tall order, but courageous! And some groups (the Sierra Club, for instance), try to protect large parts of our life (e.g., the environment) – wow, another huge, but great cause. On the other end of the spectrum, smaller groups like us act either locally, or on smaller issues. We focus on some of the smaller battles. SUVs in our case.

Is our type of cause too limited? Absolutely not. First, most activist groups are small and are more effective fighting a smaller battle (i.e., local groups who fight to keep public parks in their town, or keep schools from closing, etc.). And any cause is a good cause. The key is to fight for something you believe in, and to make sure you make your voice heard.

But why SUVs?

I don't lend much support to the issue of SUVs being too big, just because you can't see past them... but safety is a big issue. The safety issue is starting to be taken up by the US Congress: <www.citizen.org/autosafety/nhtsa/index.cfm>.

As for fuel efficiency, of course, all cars pollute. But so do airplanes, lawn mowers, BBQs, chemical plants, dry cleaners, snow mobiles, speed boats, etc. Should we fight everything that pollutes? Why not focus on jet emissions? Or why not look harder at the energy industry and their emissions? For instance, the developed world's huge reliance on coal plants for energy rather than renewables. Perhaps automobile emissions aren't as important as this?

I'm not actually arguing this. My real argument is that we should fight all battles, big and small, all at once.

The point of focusing on SUVs is that the auto industry has taken advantage of outdated regulations (which were originally designed to help farmers who used light trucks as work vehicles), and the federal government, because of its ties to industry, is unwilling to change this situation.

Because of this, SUVs and other light trucks in the US are allowed to have poorer fuel efficiency, which leads to more pollution, greater dependence on foreign oil, and all of the associated side effects (health problems, oil industry lobbying and corrupt government, global tensions, and – some might even say – war and terrorism).

SUV Drivers: What Are They Thinking?

"I don't trust roads. I fear that one day while I am at work, the road to my home will disappear. I know that it's six lanes wide and would be difficult to remove, but I want to be prepared just in case."

"I'm really a forest ranger, not a CPA. I just do this as a hobby. Soon I'll be heading back up to my cabin, chopping wood and fetching water out of a stream with a bucket."

"I'm about ready to walk off this stupid-ass job and head for the hills. It could happen any day now. That just looks like a new big-screen TV in the back; it's really a tent."

"My life lacks drama. The possibility of this thing rolling gives me that adrenaline surge that keeps me going."

Hummer Drivers: What Are They Thinking?

"If the war continues and they start calling up thirty-five year olds, I'm going to be ready. In fact, I'll supply my own vehicle."

"The other SUVs just aren't big enough. I'm a conservationist and it's a waste of concrete not to fill the width of the lane."

"When the other golfers see me pull up, they'll run with fear. Then I'll have the whole course to myself."

"I believe in Autogeddon. The sooner we use up all of the earthly fossil fuels and civilization collapses, the sooner Jesus will come."

B.C. Brown '03

You will admit that things would improve somewhat if automobiles did get greater fuel efficiency. Although all cars could be regulated more strictly to both lessen emissions and raise fuel efficiency, the government should start by making SUVs and light trucks adhere to the same rules. Here's a fact: Raising the fuel efficiency standard for light trucks (which includes SUVs) to that of cars (27.5 mpg) would save one million barrels of oil per day. We can do even better. Raising the average for cars to 45 mpg and light trucks to 34 mpg would save three million barrels of oil per day (from the Sierra Club). This is way more oil saved than we would ever get by opening the Alaskan Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration (could save a huge part of the environment here). And it is more oil than we import from Kuwait (some major oil dependence implications here as well).

> ***"Is our type of cause too limited? Absolutely not. Most activist groups are small and are more effective fighting a smaller battle."***

There are, of course, other benefits to this small piece of legislation, were it to be passed. Emissions would be reduced. This has implications for the environment and people's health. In fact, the benefits here deserve quite a bit more writing.

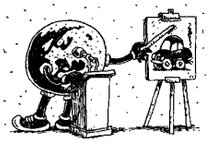
So, the main point is, should we ignore the possibilities here, and instead focus on a greater cause? Or can't we focus on both causes at once? Because, in the long run, we might lose one of these battles, and it would be better to have fought for both so that we have a better chance at winning at least one. In fact, we should be fighting many battles – the more we fight, the more we'll win.

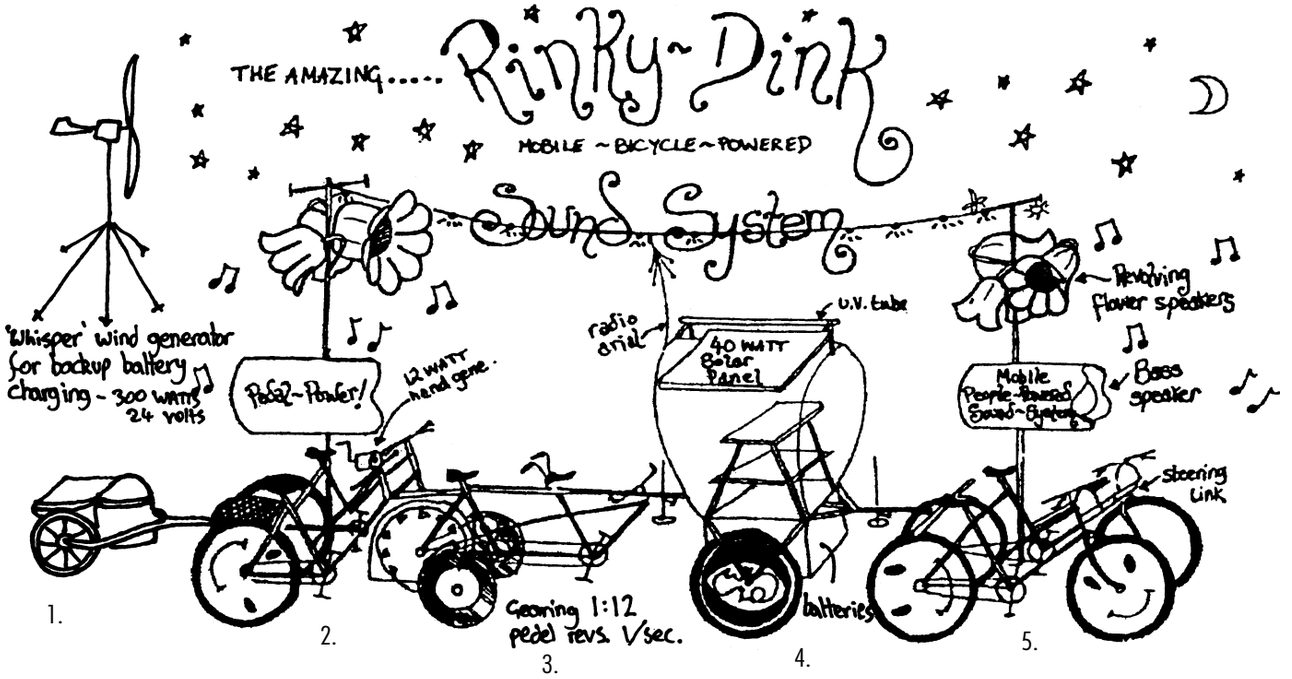
I whole-heartedly agree that there are too many cars on the road. There is too much traffic, there are too many emissions, there is too much oil being used. If we as a society were to reduce the number of cars being driven though better public transportation and awareness, it would greatly help all of these problems. Don't give up this fight, because it is a very important one. But by the same token, don't give up on our (perhaps smaller) fight, which is to attack the current regulations on fuel efficiency and emissions. Both fights are worth it.

Some people do small parts to help these causes, and some do large parts. Some people, for instance, carpool, some ride bikes, some don't buy furniture made of rare hardwoods, etc. And some take a "grander" approach, for example, by donating money to organisations who fight at the policy level – for instance, to protect rainforests through legislation, or to greatly increase funding in public transport and education, etc. My point, again, is that everything that people do here is important – it would be a shame to tell people who only carpool that they aren't doing enough for their environment, so stop doing it... I think we have to be careful to not discourage people from helping in any way possible. ■

CB#19_part2.p65 23 3/10/04, 6:18 AM
Black

Skill Sharing





1) Kitchen Unit: Food Box Stove. 2) Rear Tractor Unit: Radio, Ariel, Bubble Machine, Inflatable Octopus, Kids Seats. 3) Tandem: Premanent magnetic generator (720 rpm output: 120 Watts). Two cyclists on tandem can produce enough energy to power sounds, lights, band. 4) Sound Trailer: Decks, mixer, amps, tape recporder, light control box, switch mode power supply p-24 volt to 13.8 volts DC direct drive or 24-volt battery charging. 5) Front Tractor Unit: When mobile, the Rinky Dink can carry five adults and three children.

How To Make A Pedal-Powered Sound System

by Joe Dodds

"Pedal power uses the most powerful muscles in the body: the quads, hamstrings, and calves. When pedalling in a circular motion at 60-80 revolutions per minute, with the use of toe clips, almost every muscle in the human legs can be used to make energy. Ninety-five percent of the exertion put into pedal power is converted into energy. The average rider at a continuous road speed of 12 miles per hour can produce a quarter horsepower, or enough energy to light two, one hundred-watt light bulbs."

- *The Pedal Power Project at the Campus Centre for Appropriate Technology (CCAT), Humboldt State University, from* Grassroots Good News, *Jan. 2004.*

While the manifold benefits of the bicycle as a form of transport frequently cover the pages of *Car Busters* and other environmental publications, pedal power as an energy source is less discussed. In fact, the bicycle is perhaps the most efficient energy system yet developed by humanity.

"With the human population at six billion and growing, pedal power can be incorporated in the lives of families living in Third World countries to improve the quality of their lives while being friendly to the earth," say members of the CCAT project (pronounced *sea cat*). "Pedal power is an appropriate technology for now and for the future."

I would include the "First World" and any other "world" as well, as CCAT do themselves. CCAT (www.humboldt.edu/~ccat) uses pedal power (along with solar and wind energy) to cover most of the energy requirements in their alternative energy demonstration house.

The "Human Energy Converter," a fleet of stationary bikes connected to small 12-volt generators, is used to power laptops, TVs, washing machines, pottery wheels, drill presses, grinders, sanders, wood carvers, stone polishers, blenders, generators, etc. The same technology is also used to power the sound system at political rallies and parties.

(1) CCAT and The Human Energy Converter

So what the heck is the Human Energy Converter?

Otherwise known as the HEC, it's "a series of exercise bikes individually hooked up to small 12-volt generators, connected by flywheels," the CCAT website explains.

"They each put out about 50-100 watts, depending on who's pedalling, and we connect them in series and in parallel to make a 24-volt charge. We have eight matching bikes mounted to a flat bed or just lined up on a lawn, and people line up to pedal the power for the event! It's a great hit among all party-goers, usually affording a great view of the stage as well as fun for kids and the kid within the adults."

The electricity made by the bikes is run through a 4024 Trace inverter to make clean AC electricity good for sound systems. Excess electricity can be fed into the public energy grid or stored in batteries.

While they also sometimes wire in solar panels to the HEC set-up for extra power, this is not required, but as they say "it's just nice to say we made more electricity than we used." <http://humboldt.edu/~ccat/energy/pedal-power.html and www.utne.com>

For Each 12-Volt Power Generator You Will Need...

• *An exercise bike*, preferably a front mounted flywheel with a channel to accommodate a fan belt. The most effective gearing is a 52-tooth chainring on the bike connected by the chain to

CB#19_part2.p65 24 3/10/04, 6:18 AM
Black

the flywheel, which has a 16-tooth freewheel.
• *A flywheel* of solid metal 15.5" diameter.
• *A generator pulley* 2.5" diameter. The diameter can be increased to make it easier to spin.
• *A fan belt* big enough to cover the flywheel and generator wheel.
• *Generator.* 24-volt DC permanent magnetic generator, rated at 1800 rpm, with a potential of 1/3 horsepower output. The voltage output is directly proportional to the rpm. The generator can be rotated by this system at 900 rpm's, leading to an output of 12 volts.
• *Wiring.* 10 gauge copper solid copper wire, Resistance value of R = 1 ohm's % 1,000 feet
• *Voltage regulator.* 20 amp flat automotive fuse to be placed in line with the positive electric wire. This limits the amount of current when the battery is full to prevent damage.
• *Diode.* A one way electricity valve placed on either the positive or negative wiring. Rated at 25 amps, and at least 35 volts.
• *Lead-Acid Battery.* 12 volt marine/trolling battery, 55 lbs., 100 amp hour, 20 hour cycle, with cycles life 300 discharges.
• *Inverter.* Changes 12 volt DC into 110 volt AC. Inverters must be able to handle potential peak electrical loads. To determine the loads, look at the watt requirement on the back of the appliances.

- based on Ben Erickson, CCAT, see: <www.humboldt.edu/~ccat/at/pedalpower/hgen.html>

(2) The Rinky Dink Pedal-Powered Sound System

My personal favourite system though has to be Rinky Dink, a familiar sight to many regulars at UK festivals, parties, and protests. I last saw them at on the fateful day of September 11, 2001, at the protest against DSEI, Europe's biggest arms fair held in London's Docklands. They never fail to give inspiration at these events and a general lift of spirits. Like CCAT it combines pedal power with a sprinkling of solar and wind energy, but adds potential movability into the mix.

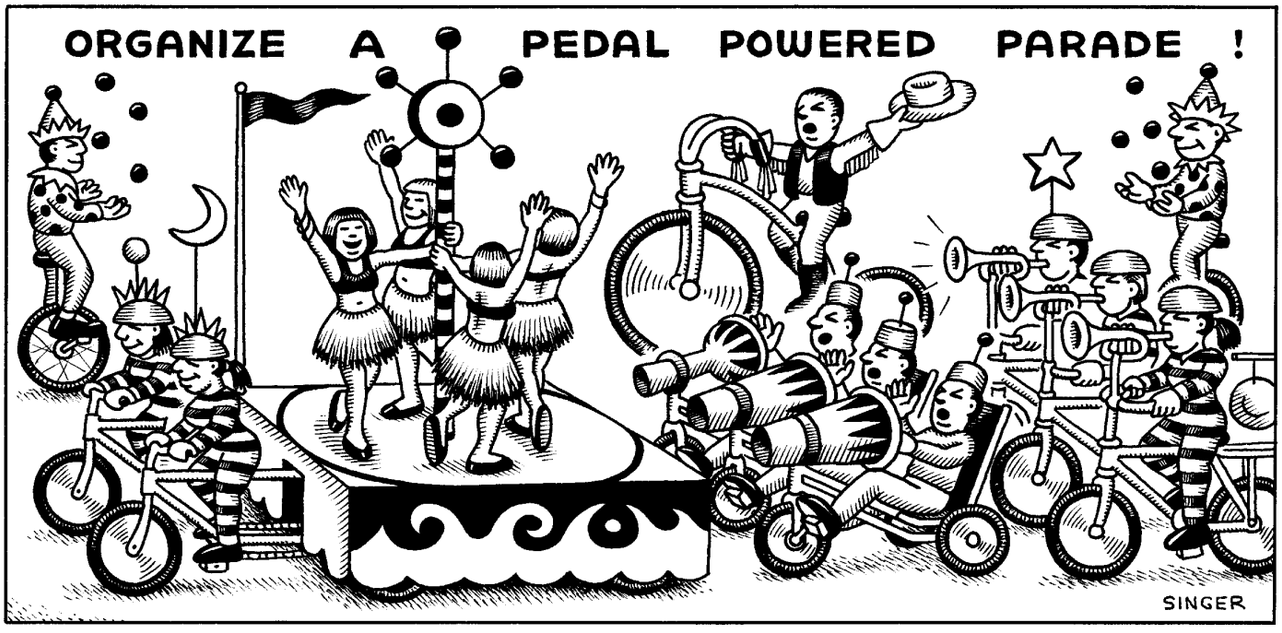
EFFICIENCY
Steam engine: 4%
Car: 17%
Permanent Magnetic Generator: 70%
Bicycle: 90-95%

It is made from a series of linked tractor units made from recycled bike frames. It is 17 feet long and 8 feet high. It can be ridden up to 30 miles a day as a mobile exhibition or converted into a stationary sound system/light show for bands, dj's, radio broadcasts and live recordings. A purpose built permanent magnet generator (720 rpm output; 120W), originally designed to power the radio communications for the Flying Doctor Service in Tanzania, is mounted on the rear of a tandem. Two riders produce an average of 40 watts. The three phase electricity produced is transferred through a cable as a spiral helix to a switch mode power supply, where it is regulated from AC to a constant 13.8v DC direct drive (or 24v battery charging) which is then fed to the amplifiers. When not needed immediately, this power, along with 40 W solar energy can be stored in batteries for later use. Using two four-person stationary generators to produce an average 600 W of power, as well as wind generators and solar panels, Rinky Dink can power 100 v DC amps at 300 W and, using invertors, provide mains (240 v) power for any low powered stage equipment (e.g mixers, samplers) thereby providing a clean sustainable PA. For more details, see www.rinky-dink.org.

Pedal-powered sound systems demonstrate the direct use of pedal power, and are great for community participation and direct experience as different people take their turns to "dance" on the pedals. If you've got a Critical Mass in your town, why not try to make one? ■

If you find these instructions a bit too hard to follow for your level of technical know-how, consult someone with electrical engineering knowledge before proceeding.

NO EXIT © Andy Singer



CB#19_part2.p65 25 3/10/04, 6:19 AM
Black

Studies & Reports

Study Shows Americans Want to Stop Driving to Work

A recent study commissioned by WageWorks Center for Commuter Studies surveyed 747 people in metropolitan Chicago, DC, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco about their commute. The results demonstrate Americans growing dissatisfaction with driving to work and increasing interest in public transportation, walking and bicycling.

Despite the fact that a majority of the respondents (53%) commute by car, only 34% of them believe that driving is the ideal way to commute; 24% would like to walk to work; 30% take the train, subway or bus; and 5% bicycle. According to the report, "A majority of respondents liked the reduction in stress (61%) of taking public transportation, followed by the reduction in cost over driving (58%). In the open-ended statements, reading and convenience were reiterated.

Relaxation was another key feature. For some, they were freed from the expense and responsibility of owning a car."

- ***Commuterstudies.com***

The Sky is Not the Limit for the EIB's Aviation Lending

A new report from CEE Bankwatch and Friends of the Earth International reveals the huge involvement of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in some of the most controversial aviation projects in Europe.

Entitled "Flying with Big Business: The European Investment Bank and the Aviation Industry," the report has been circulating widely at the European Parliament. It was launched at a recent conference on transport and noise.

Financial support for the aviation industry through tax exemptions and subsidies has been a source of embarrassment for the industry for some time. A diverse range of stakeholders, from NGOs to the European Commission, have long criticised such handouts. In addition to these better-known arrangements, the report finds that the aviation industry is a huge receiver of public money through EIB loans.

In the last five years, the report details, the EIB has provided the aviation industry with eight billion EUR of virtually interest free loans. Some of the most controversial aviation projects in Europe have attracted these loans, including London Heathrow Terminal 5, Amsterdam Schiphol Airport Expansion and Sofia Airport in Bulgaria.

- ***CEE Bankwatch***

Global Warming Could Cause One Million Extinctions

A quarter of known land animals and plants, more than a million species, will eventually die out because of the global warming that will take place over the next 50 years, the most important study of its kind has concluded.

International scientists from eight countries have warned that, based even on the most conservative estimates, rising temperatures will trigger a global mass extinction of unprecedented proportions. They said global warming will set in train a far bigger threat to terrestrial species than previously realised.

It is the first time such a powerful assessment has been made and its conclusions will shock even those environmentalists accustomed to "worst-case" scenarios.

Leeds University professor Chris Thomas, who led the research team, said only the "immediate" switch to green technologies and the active removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere could avert ecological disaster.

"It will be a surprise to a lot of people," he said. "For some years scientists have said climate change may lead to some extinctions but until now there's been no numerical analysis of how big this is likely to be. We had no idea of whether it would lead to the extinction of a few species or a really substantial number. This study suggests the latter and it's extremely worrying.

"If the projections can be extrapolated globally, and to other groups of land animals and plants, our analyses suggest that much more than a million species could be threatened with extinction as a result of climate change."

The study, in the journal *Nature*, investigated 1,103 species of plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs, butterflies and other insects living in six areas – Europe, South Africa, Australia, Brazil, Mexico and Costa Rica.

The scientists calculated the effect of rising temperatures on each species using the three future scenarios proposed by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

- ***The Independent, Jan. 8***

School Run Hooks Car Junkies of the Future

Does parenthood sometimes feel like an endless taxi-driving shift without the compensation of receiving fares? If so, there will be scant comfort in a new report for the Scottish Executive which shows many of today's children hate walking, detest buses and can't wait to buy their own cars.

The study suggests that concerted efforts to wean people away from cars and on to buses – or better still their own two feet – have made little impact on the younger generation.

Social attitudes consultants Derek Halden were commissioned by the Executive to examine the attitudes of primary and secondary school children towards transport.

The consultants conducted face-to-face interviews with children and organised focus groups. In the study, 88% of the children said their preferred method of transport was going by car. In second place, with just 4%, was cycling; walking and the train got 3% and the bus was preferred by only 2% of children.

Seventy-nine percent of the children regarded the car as the most "cool" transport option.

According to the study, even those children who might be swayed by the anti-car message are put off by the dismal standard of school buses and the lack of anywhere to lock away a bike to keep it safe. The report concludes that schools and councils should take a leading role in encouraging children away from cars.

- ***Scotland on Sunday, Dec. 21***

advert

www.cyclesmaximus.com

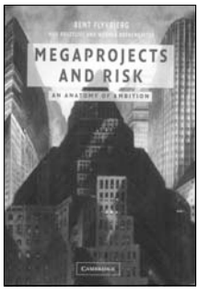
CB#19_part2.p65 26 3/10/04, 6:19 AM

Black

Book Reviews

Megaprojects and Risk

Bent Flyvbjerg et al., 2001, Cambridge UP, UK; ISBN 0-521-00946-4



This book can be divided into two parts: first, the authors identify the weaknesses of a conventional approach to megaprojects and argue why a different approach is needed, and; second, they argue empirically and theoretically how the weaknesses can be overcome by emphasising risk, institutional issues and accountability. Throughout the book, the major points are illustrated on the basis of in-depth case studies of three megaprojects that form part of the so-called Trans-European Transport Network – the Channel Tunnel, between France and UK, the Great Belt link between East Denmark and continental Europe, and the Øresund link between Sweden and Denmark.

Statistics show that in the past 70 years overrun or underestimated costs haven't decreased, and so, no learning is taking place. This cannot be explained by error but seems best explained by strategic misrepresentation, namely deliberately *lying* by project promoters and forecasters to get their projects started. It is hard to predict causes of cost overrun even though cases in excess of 50% are proving to be common. It seems appropriate and necessary to start analysing the risk involved in (misleadingly) estimated costs. Misrepresentations of costs lead to misallocation of scarce resources, which in return will be paid by taxpayers or private investors, and we are talking about billions of dollars here!

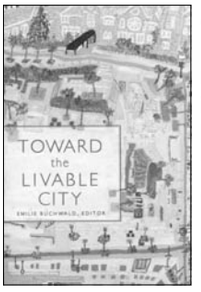
The authors provide four main solutions. The first solution, transparency, involves engaging stakeholder groups and the general public in planning and decision making from an early stage. The identification of public interest objectives and requirements that the project must meet, including environmental assessment, is the second solution. Third, the regulatory regime that will apply to the project, including the principles of public and private involvement, should be defined. Fourth, a degree of private capital should be used to finance the project without a sovereign guarantee; private investors should be careful to not put money in projects of dubious profitability and should investigate cases thoroughly before accepting jobs.

Professor Bent Flyvbjerg and colleagues managed to write an important book which concerns citizens all over the world. They show that the risk assessment tools are well established and that the main problem is the stubbornness in "over-insured" projects. I believe that "Megaprojects and Risk" is a big step forward to a more sustainable way of dealing with megaprojects that tend to harm the environment, swallow resources, valuable space and waste public money. It should be obligatory reading before any project is being paid for, planned or promoted.

- ***Roeland Kuijper***

Toward the Livable City

Emilie Buchwald, ed., Milkweed Editions, Minneapolis; ISBN 1-57131-271-4



Minnesota, though perhaps not as defensive about the auto industry as its SUV-manufacturing neighbours Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio, is a sprawly-crawly place where many folks want to have their nature and bulldoze it, too. So it's great to see Minneapolis' Milkweed Editions offer up this attractive, diverse, and accessible urbanist reader.

I was happy to find some of my favorite authors, such as Jane Holtz Kay (*Asphalt Nation*), James Howard Kunstler (*Geography of Nowhere, Home from Nowhere, The City in Mind*), Bill McKibben (*The Death of Nature, Hope Human* and *Wild, Enough*) and Ken Avidor (*Roadkill Bill* from Car Busters Press) together in one book. The collection is admittedly aimed at a US audience, with Boston and Minneapolis getting the most attention, though there are also examples from Curitiba, Brazil and European cities.

Jane Holtz Kay's "The Lived-In City" opens the collection, followed by "Divorcing the City" by Lynda Morgenroth, who, to escape endless construction noise and obnoxious neighbors, leaves Boston (also Kay's city), but has some regrets, especially as she finds herself spending more time in her car. "All the years of using my feet and moving through an urban landscape, with intense sensation and bodily involvement kept a primitive part of me alive. Driving destroys the connection between places, a frustration of our primate need to recognise and register territory in a down-to-earth, sensing, kinesthetic way."

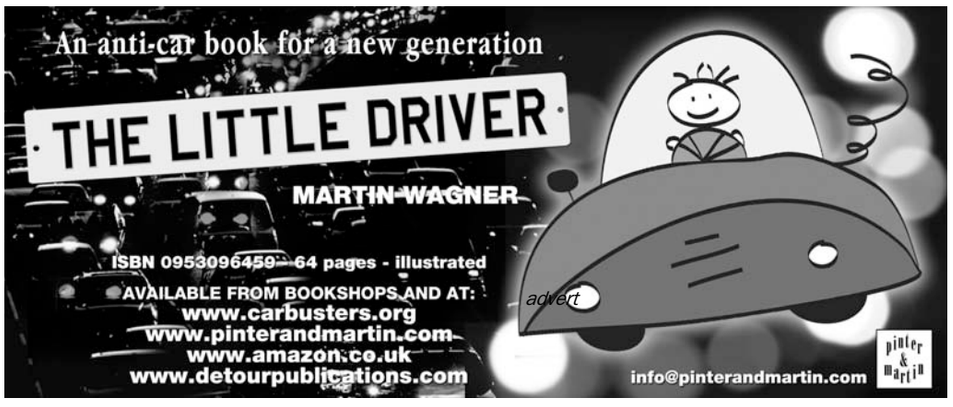
Though Ken Avidor is the only contributor in a section called "Between City and Suburb: Automania," nearly all of the writers mention the menace of the automobile in some way or other. Phillip Lopate, in considering the New York City waterfront, calls the West Side Highway and Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive the "original sin of Manhattan planning" for the way they act as moats, separating the waterfronts from the inland.

john a. powell (sic lower-case) in "Opportunity-based Housing" says "the overemphasis on funding highway construction has reduced access to job opportunities for low-income households" and Jay Walljasper in "How to Fall in Love with Your Hometown" notes "The Interstate Highway System is the largest and most staggeringly expensive public works project in human history, and we've spent billions and billions more to widen streets and highways in almost every urban neighborhood and rural township throughout America."

While these may not seem like shocking statements, they may still be news to many citizens, who Buchwald is hoping to lure into involvement by having them ask if their city is "livable": "In recent urban development parlance, a 'livable city' includes a central core of mixed-use housing and commerce easily accessible to pedestrians, job and housing opportunities available to all socio-economic groups, diverse cultural offerings, and a 'green' agenda."

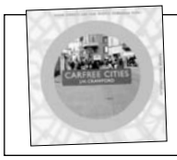
A friendly-looking paperback with a few photos and pen and watercolor illustrations, *Toward the Livable City* might serve as a bridge to a sister stranded in the suburbs or as an introduction to "car repair" for a clueless city council member. There is also more info under "livable city project" on Worldashome.org.

- ***Bridget Brown***



CB#19_part2.p65 27 3/10/04, 6:19 AM
Black

Resources



Carfree Cities NEW!
now in paperback

EUR 30 / US$30 / £21
shipping included

We're sending the famed "One Less Car" bike sticker to China! [prototype above] They'll be distributed in April at a Beijing confrerence called "Shifting Social Spaces in China's Transition?: Environmentalism, Public Participation and Popular Protest." More ambitious distribution plans are in the works, which will be carried out by Special Agent Chopstick and team under the auspices of the top-secret "Operation Shanghai Surprise."

Nonfiction

Asphalt Nation
Jane Holtz Kay, 1998, 440 pages
EUR 23, £16, US$23, AU$40, or CZK 670

Bike Cult
The Ultimate Guide to Human-Powered Vehicles
David Perry, 1995, 570 pages
EUR 32, £22, US$32, AU$55, or CZK 935

Carfree Cities
J.H. Crawford, 2000, 324 pages
hardcover: EUR 40, £28, US$40, AU$68, or CZK 1180
paperback: EUR 30, £21, US$30, AU$52, or CZK 885

Car Busters Graphics Book
Car Busters, 1999, 44 pages
EUR 5, £3.50, US$5, AU$9, CZK 125

Critical Mass
Bicycling's Defiant Celebration
Chris Carlsson, editor, 2002, 256 pages
EUR 23, £16, US$23, AU$40, or CZK 670

Cutting Your Car Use
Save Money, Be Healthy, Be Green!
Anna Semlyen, 2000, 160 pages
EUR 10, £7, US$10, AU$18, or CZK 250

Direct Action Manual
Earth First!, 1998, 152 pages
EUR 6, £4, US$6, AU$10, or CZK 150

Divorce Your Car
Ending the Love Affair With the Automobile
Katie Alvord, 2000, 320 pages
EUR 20, £14, US$20, AU$35, or CZK 500

Ecocities
Building Cities in Balance with Nature
Richard Register, 2002, 290 pages
EUR 20, £14, US$20, AU$35, or CZK 500

The End of the Road
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1991, 300 pages
EUR 10, £7, US$10, AU$18, or CZK 250

Family Mouse Behind the Wheel
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1992, 30 pages
hardcover: EUR 10, £7, US$10, AU$18, or CZK 250

For Love of the Automobile
Looking Back Into the History of Our Desires
Wolfgang Sachs, 1992, 227 pages, hardcover
EUR 40, £28, US$40, AU$68, or CZK 1180

The Geography of Nowhere
James Howard Kunstler, 1994, 304 pages
EUR 17, £12, US$17, AU$29, or CZK 500

Home from Nowhere
Remaking Our Everyday World for the 21st Century
James Howard Kunstler, 1998, 320 pages
EUR 17, £12, US$17, AU$29, or CZK 500

Life Between Buildings
Jan Gehl, 2001, 202 pages, fourth English edition
EUR 20, £14, US$20, AU$35, or CZK 500

New City Spaces
Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, 2001, 263 pages
hardcover: EUR 55, £38, US$55, AU$95, or CZK 1,620

Street Reclaiming
Creating Livable Streets and Vibrant Communities
David Engwicht, 1999, 207 pages
EUR 23, £16, US$23, AU$40, or CZK 670

Sustainability and Cities
Overcoming Automobile Dependence
Peter Newman and Jeff Kenworthy, 1999, 350 pages
EUR 46, £32, US$46, AU$80, or CZK 1350

Wise Fool Basics
K. Ruby, Wise Fool, 1999, 96 pages
EUR 13, £9, US$13, AU$22 or CZK 375

Fiction/Kids

The Age of the Bicycle
Miriam Webster, 1998, 270 pages
EUR 10, £7, US$10, AU$18, or CZK 250

A quirky novel of love, magic, river gods and the mysterious end of the Automobile Age. Combining fairytale possibilities with sharp social satire to produce a novel to entertain children and adults alike.

Alice in Underland
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1999
EUR 10, £7, US$10, AU$18, or CZK 250

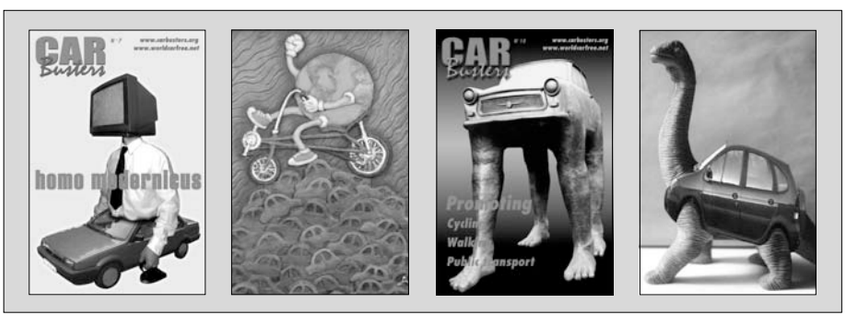
"A curious mixture of nonsense, social satire and surrealist fairy tale, which takes the classical Alice through the dreary landscape of suburban America." Entertaining and insightful.

Family Mouse Behind the Wheel
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1992, 30 pages
hardcover: EUR 10, £7, US$10, AU$18, or CZK 250

This colourful book teaches children the problems of car culture through the eyes of a family of anthropomorphised forest mice, who decide to buy a car, build a road into their previously intact forest home, and eventually, create an urban hell. An eye-opener complete with the obligatory moralistic message.

The Little Driver
Martin Wagner, 2003, 56 pages
EUR 10, £7, US$10, AU$18, or CZK 250

Joe always dreamt of driving his own car. When his wish comes true and he takes his brand-new sports car for a spin through town and country, his adventures soon take a turn for the unexpected. A children's book for young and old, *The Little Driver* takes a fresh look at our obsession with cars through the eyes of a boy still young enough to take nothing for granted.



Hot off the press: Among our new line of Car Busters postcards, the above designs expand our range of consumer products for the entire family! An assortment of ten postcards costs EUR 5 / US$5 / £3.50.

Car Busters Back Issues

Have an incomplete collection? Looking for a perfect gift? Not knowing how to best invest your money for long-term growth? Well, look no further! Get any back issue of Car Busters for a mere *EUR 2 / US$2 / £1.40. Or get a complete set (18 issues so far) for EUR 20 / US$20 / £14 (Western Rate) or EUR 10 / US$10 (Eastern Rate). Or order an assortment of 100 magazines for EUR 100 / US$100 / £70.*

CB#19_part2.p65 28 3/10/04, 6:19 AM
Black

Not finding what you're looking for?
Our members/subscribers get a 10% discount at <www.detourpublications.com> on over 130 books and other resources on transportation and urban ecology.

Videos, Etc.

Autoschreck / Car-Fright

1994, English and German versions, PAL format only
EUR 20, £12.50, US$20, AU$36, or CZK 600

The car is taking over the city. Michael Hartmann refuses to bow to them, refuses even to divert around the cars illegally parked on the pavement (sidewalk). *Autoschreck* is a documentary about a man discharged from a mental hospital for being perfectly normal. He was just giving the cars a taste of their own medicine.

We Are Traffic!

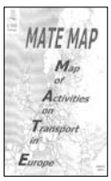
1999, 50 min., PAL or NTSC format
EUR 25, £17.50, US$25, or CZK 735

A chronicle of the history and development of the "Critical Mass" bicycle movement from its beginnings in San Francisco in 1992 to its global spread.

Return of the Scorcher

1992, 30 min., PAL or NTSC format
EUR 25, £17.50, US$25, or CZK 735

A look at bike culture around the world with beautiful and inspiring scenes of bike use filmed in China, The Netherlands, Denmark and the USA.



MATE Booklet and Map

(Map of Activities on Transport in Europe), A SEED Europe, 2000
EUR 7, £4, US$7, AU$12, CZK 200

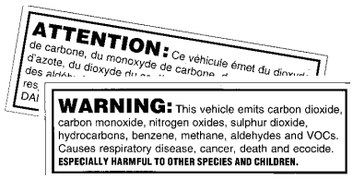
A comprehensive guide to what is happening in the spider-like murky web of European transport, including an overview of TENs and TINA projects.

Stickers

"One Less Car" Bike Stickers

Available in Chinese, Czech, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Irish, Italian, Norwegian/ Swedish/Danish, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovakian, Spanish and Welsh. Sized for bike frames, water-resistant.
Ten stickers: EUR 2, £1.40, US$2, AU$3.50, or CZK 50

The famous "One Less Car" sticker has become multilingual. Show drivers that your bike is not a part of the traffic problem.


ATTENTION: Ce véhicule émet du dioxyd
de carbone, du monoxyde de carbone,
d'azote, du dioxyde
WARNING: This vehicle emits carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, hydrocarbons, benzene, methane, aldehydes and VOCs. Causes respiratory disease, cancer, death and ecocide.
ESPECIALLY HARMFUL TO OTHER SPECIES AND CHILDREN.

"Cancer Warning" Stickers

Big hard-to-remove stickers for cars.
Available in French, German, English, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian and Czech.
For 15 stickers: EUR 3, £2, US$3, AU$5, or CZK 80

Stop-Sign Improvement

One: EUR 0.75, £0.50, US$0.75, AU$1.50 or CZK 25
Ten: EUR 6, £4, US$6, AU$11 or CZK 180

Forty-six centimetres long. Bright red. These big glossy vinyl stickers are just the right size to go under the word "STOP" on stop signs. Perfect for a late-night action in your hometown.

Payment Instructions

Mail-Order Resources

*Shipping is included in all listed prices (surface rate outside Europe). We accept **US**, **British**, **French** and **Australian** cheques. **Credit card payments** can be made at <www.carbusters.org>. We also accept international **postal money orders (in CZK or USD)**, and even cash in the currencies listed below (at your own risk, but seems OK).*

***Payments to:** Car Busters, Krátká 26, 100 00 Prague 10, Czech Rep.*

*Should you prefer to pay by **bank transfer**, please contact us.*

Magazine Subscriptions

Country	4 Issues	8 Issues
Australia	20 Dollars	32.50 Dollars
Czech Rep.	160 Korun	260 Korun
Eurozone	16 Euro	26 Euro
UK	10 Pounds	16 Pounds
US	16 Dollars	26 Dollars

Memberships

Member: EUR 30, £20, US$30, AU$50, CZK 600
Supporter: EUR 50, £35, US$50, AU$80, CZK 1000
Saviour: EUR 100, £70, US$100, AU$160, CZK 2000

***Membership benefits/premiums** are described on the following page.*

***The prices above** are calculated for "Over-Developed World" residents, in each of the currencies that we accept. Single copies cost EUR/US$4 or equivalent. Eastern Europeans and "Global South" residents wanting magazine subscriptions or single copies can pay 1/3 the Western rate.*

***Distribution Orders** (5 or more copies): EUR/US$2 each or equivalent (you sell at EUR/US$4 and keep the difference). In Eastern Europe and the "Global South," you buy at EUR/US$0.66 and sell at EUR/US$1 or more. This is beginning to sound like the stock market...*

Shipping included
in all listed prices.

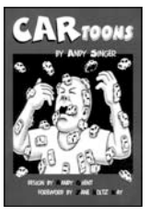
In a Hurry?
Order from Carbusters.org.

Car Busters Press

***Bulk Discount:** Ten or more "CARtoons" and "Roadkill Bill" books, any combination, for half price.*

CARtoons

Andy Singer, 2001, 100 pages, optional CD-ROM contains high-resolution TIF images of all graphics
Book: EUR 10, £7, US$10, AU$18, or CZK 150
CD-ROM: EUR 4, £2.50, US$4, AU$8, or CZK 80



A personal and provocative look at our relationship with the car, from Ford's first assembly lines to today's "drive-through" society. Features seven pithy chapter texts and a compilation of hard-hitting quotations, plus 90 of Singer's infamous graphics (available for free nonprofit reuse). *CARtoons* doesn't just take a bite out of car culture, it chews it up and spits it out.

Roadkill Bill

Ken Avidor, 2001, 108 pages
EUR 10, £7, US$10, AU$18, or CZK 150

It's the comic strip that looks at cars, technology and philosophy from the viewpoint of a frequently squashed rodent. Here the wonderful, provocative, amusing and sometimes gruesome cartoons are collected together for the first time. Avidor gives voice to the suffering soul of humanity that feels bulldozed and paved over by industrial technology run amok.

Innovative transport solutions

Eco-friendly FOLDING BIKES to enhance car-free mobility are among the exciting new cycle technologies we explore in

VELO VISION

magazine. Try a sample copy - and discover the vibrant world of cycling as a transport solution

Order subscriptions (or just a sample copy) to anywhere in the world online at our busy website: *www.velovision.com*

Velo Vision,
The Environmental Community Centre,
St Nicholas Fields, York, YO10 3EN, UK.
Tel +44 1904 438 224

advert

CB#19_part2.p65 29 3/10/04, 6:19 AM
Black

WORLD CARFREE NETWORK WORKS TO **BUILD AND MAINTAIN** THE GLOBAL **CARFREE MOVEMENT**. ITS PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS **ASSIST** PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD **TAKING ON** CAR CULTURE AND PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF LIFE. WE AIM TO **FACILITATE EXCHANGE** AND **COOPERATION** AMONG ACTIVISTS AND CAMPAIGNERS, REACH OUT TO THE PUBLIC, **INSPIRE** NEW ACTIVISTS AND **CHANGE THE WORLD**.

- INTERNATIONAL QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
- PRINT AND ON-LINE RESOURCE CENTRE
- ANNUAL CONFERENCES
- WORLD CARFREE DAY COORDINATION
- MONTHLY E-MAIL NEWS BULLETIN
- WORLDWIDE CONTACT DIRECTORY
- ECOTOPIA BIKETOUR 2004
- INDEPENDENT BOOK PUBLISHING
- AUTOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

JOIN WORLD CARFREE NETWORK!

❑ **Member - US$30/EUR30/£20***
[includes a one-year magazine subscription, an assortment of bike stickers and one book out of three: Andy Singer's *CARtoons*, Ken Avidor's *Roadkill Bill*, or Martin Wagner's *The Little Driver*]

❑ **Supporter - US$50/EUR50/£35***
[includes a one-year magazine subscription and two books out of three: *CARtoons, Roadkill Bill, The Little Driver*]

❑ **Saviour - US$100/EUR100/£70***
[includes a two-year magazine subscription, a copy of *Carfree Cities* by JH Crawford, and one book out of three: CARtoons, *Roadkill Bill*, or *The Little Driver*]

❑ US$16/EUR16* - Subscription Only: 4 Issues

❑ US$26/EUR26* - Subscription Only: 8 Issues

❑ _____ - Donator (Economic Liberty Rate)

❑ I'm enclosing _____ for the following books or resources: _____.

❑ I want to receive your monthly e-mail bulletin, so here's my e-mail address (written clearly): _____.

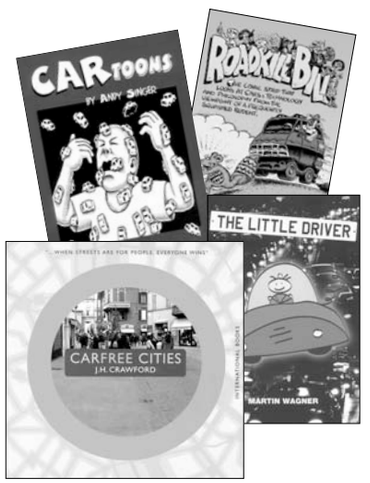
Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ **Date**: _____

PRICES VALID THROUGH 2004

** or the equivalent in AUD or CND.* ***Cheques****: Car Busters accepts US, French, British and Australian cheques.* ***Credit card payments*** *can be made on the Carbusters.org website. Other payment options are listed on p. 29.*



➤ ***World Carfree Network****, Krátká 26, 100 00 Prague 10, Czech Republic - e-mail: info@worldcarfree.net - website: www.worldcarfree.net*

Announcements

Velomobility Seminar Looks at Human-Powered Vehicles

The 5th European Velomobile Symposium, to be held in Germersheim, Germany, on April 23 will look at a variety of human-powered vehicles for the future, under the topic "Towards commercial velomobiles." <www.velomobile.info>

BikeSummer Comes to Seattle

From June 19 to September 21, Seattle, Washington, USA will host the sixth annual BikeSummer, a gathering of cycling enthusiasts from all over the world. The festival promises over 100 days of activities, 1,000 bicycle-related events, and 1,000,000 miles ridden. Explore by bicycle. Connect with new people. This year's event is organised by the Bicycle Alliance of Washington. <www.bikesummer.org>

German Carfree Days June 20 and 22

Planning is underway for the nationwide "Mobil ohne Auto" (MoA) campaign, being organised by a broad coalition of German environmental groups. Two events are planned: a carfree Sunday day of action on June 20 and a carfree school day on June 22. Actions and events will include bicycle demonstrations, "alternative land use ideas" (breakfast on parking lots), safe routes to school, lower public transport ticket prices, games, educational events, and more. Last year, more than 500,000 people participated. <www.mobilohneauto.de>

Fifth Annual Walking Conference, June 9-11

Walk21 is holding its fifth conference, "Cities for People" in Copenhagen, Denmark, this June. The conference is a platform for the exchange of ideas and expertise, development of best practice, policy and strategy that has been evolving around the world to encourage and support more people to choose walking as a way to travel, be healthy and relax. <www.walk21.com>

German Conference Addresses "Smart Mobility"

The second Economy in Motion conference (Wirtschaft in Bewegung) will be held in Neustadt an der Weinstrasse May 13 and 14. The motto of this year's conference is "By bike to work, school, shopping, smart mobility." <www.wirtschaftinbewegung.com>

Beijing Conference Discusses Public Transport and Protest

The Environmental Policy Group, Wageningen University and the NGO Research Center, Tsinghua University are co-organising "Shifting Social Spaces?: Environmentalism, Public Participation and Popular Protest in China," a small seminar aimed at bringing together a limited number of academics from various disciplines. These may include people working on environmental social movements, NGOs, development studies, public administration and political economy. The seminar takes place April 22-24. For more information, contact <Peter.Ho@wur.nl>. <www.ernasia.org/index.php?artn=80>

Bicycle Film Festival in New York, May 13-16

As part of Bike Month in May, organised by Transportation Alternatives, the Bicycle Film Festival shows various movies with a bike theme. The festival's mission is to be accessible and informative and to embrace all the various bike subcultures (cyclists, messengers, eco-bikers, commuters, BMX, mountain bikes, low riders, artist-made bikes, etc.). <www.bicyclefilmfestival.com>

Right to Protest Call for Support

Swiss activists are asking for help in defending a group of protesters charged in connection with blocking a road during the G8 conference in June 2004. During the protest, a policeman cut the rope on which two protesters were hanging, seriously injuring one of them. <www.aubonnebridge.net>

Cutting Your Car Use Book Seeks Collaborators

The UK book *Cutting Your Car Use* by Anna Semlyen has been revised. Anna is now looking for collaborators worldwide.

The book is good for supporting travel plans and traffic reduction events – town councils give it to people registering on their car share site or ringing a travel help line, and many organisations offer it to new recruits, for prizes, to libraries and schools, or to sell. Could you tailor this book to your country? Pertinent information is a good way to bring about change. If you are interested in doing an edition, contact <info@cuttingyourcaruse.co.uk> for more information.

Youth Transit Summit Ottawa, Canada

The Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) announces the upcoming International Youth Summit on Sustainable Urban Transportation, to be held May 26-31 in Ottawa, Canada. Youth aged 17-24 are encouraged to apply. The summit is comprised of four core sessions: teamwork and leadership, urban and transit planning, youth targeted programmes, and community marketing. Elective sessions include event and campaign planning, media relations and communications and sustainable transportation and health. <www.cutaactu.ca/youthsummit>

Sustainable Communities July 14-18

Burlington, Vermont will be home to academics and students interested in transportation challenges, cities and climate change, sustainable energy for cities and environmentally sound technologies. <www.global-community.org/conference>

World Carfree Network Announcements

Towards Carfree Cities IV: July 19-24, 2004 in Berlin

Towards Carfree Cities IV will be held July 19-24 at Humboldt University in Berlin – please note that last issue gave different dates. The conference will bring together people from around the world who are promoting practical alternatives to car dependence – walking, cycling and public transport, and ultimately the transformation of cities, towns and villages into human-scaled, pedestrian environments rich in public space and community life.

The conference, organised by World Carfree Network in partnership with several German organisations, will focus on strategy, collaboration and exchange, assisting the practical work of conference participants – whether it be organising carfree days, promoting urban cycling, or building the carfree cities of the future.

Present will be many of the foremost thinkers and doers in the carfree movement. For more information: <www.worldcarfree.net/conference>. Includes English and German versions.

Funding for Bicycle Groups

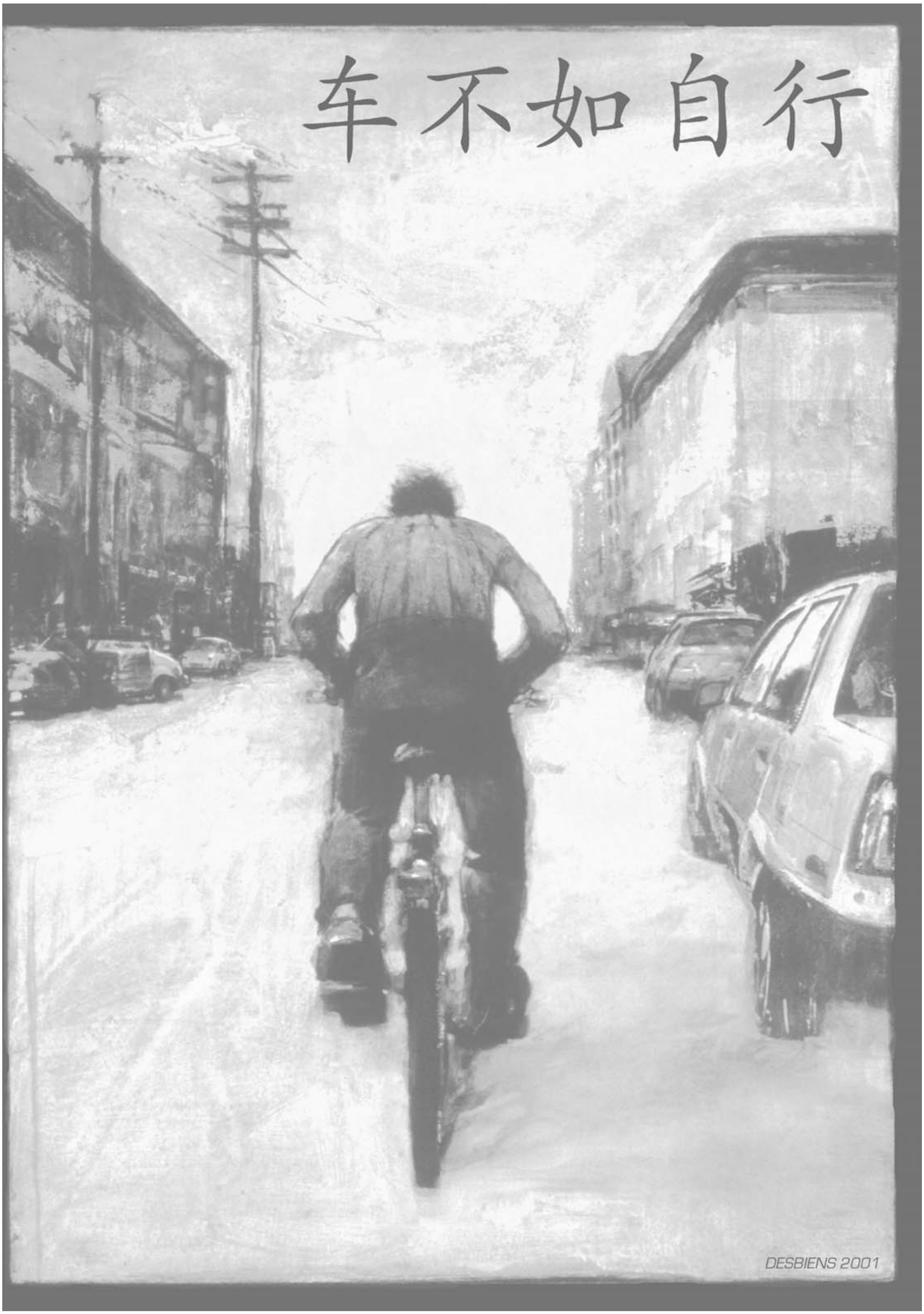
We have been approached by an anonymous supporter who wishes to donate approximately US$5,000 each to ten bicycle advocacy organisations, anywhere in the world. The donator's interest is in supporting effective groups promoting every-day cycling. We received a substantial donation from this person in 2003, so we know this is a genuine offer.

If your organisation is interested in being considered for such a donation, please the following to <info@worldcarfree.net> by April 15:

- your group's name, location, name of contact person, contact info, and website
- whether or not your group is a World Carfree Network member organisation
- up to 300 words describing your group's work, its successes, and what you would do with the donation

We will compile the submissions and turn them over to the donor to make the final selection.

CB#19_part2.p65 31 3/10/04, 6:19 AM
Black


车不如自行
DESBIENS 2001